THE NATURAL SON:

A COMEDY.

PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE.

By RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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M.DCC.LXXXV.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PROLOGUE,

By the AUTHOR.

Spoken by Mr. BANNISTER.

THE comic Muſe, as Cyprian records prove,
Was Comus' daughter, by the Queen of Love,
A left-hand lineage—whilſt the tragic Dame
From legal loins of father Vulcan came;
Therefore this *Muſe loves frolic, fun, and joke,*
That *bellows-blowing, bluſtering, puff, and ſmoke*
—Hence mother Nature's bye-begotten ſtock
Are all but chips of the old comic block;
For all derive their pedigrees in tail
From fathers frolicſome and mothers frail.
—Therefore, if in this brat of our's you trace
Some feature of his merry mother's face,
Sure, ſons of Comus, ſure you'll let him in
To your gay brotherhood, as founder's kin.
A married Muſe!—no; Muſes are too wiſe
To take a poet's jointure in the ſkies,
Th' anticipation of an unborn play,
Or ſtar-ſown acres in the milky way:
So each lives ſingle, like a cloyſter'd nun,
But does ſometimes as other nuns have done—
Prays with grave authors, with the giddy prates,
Or ogles a young poet thro' the grates.
Therefore our rule is, never to enquire
Who begat whom, what dam, or which the ſire;
But, ſoon as e'er the babe breathes vital air,
Take him, and never aſk how he got there.
Some are ſtill-born; ſome ſent to mother Earth,
Strangled by critic midwives in their birth;
And many an unacknowledg'd foundling lies
Without a parent's hand to cloſe its eyes:
Thus are our bills with deaths dramatic cramm'd,
And, what is worſe—to die is to be damn'd.
You, the Humane Society, who ſit
To mitigate the caſualties of wit,
Save a frail Muſe's NATURAL SON *from death!—*
He lives on fame, and fame lives on your breath.

Dramatis

Dramatis Perſonæ.

SIR JEFFERY LATIMER,	Mr. Baddeley.
BLUSHENLY, — —	Mr. Palmer.
RUEFULL, — —	Mr. Bensley.
JACK HUSTINGS, —	Mr. King.
MAJOR O'FLAHERTY, —	Mr. Moody.
DUMPS, — — —	Mr. Parsons.
DAVID, — — —	Mr. Wrighten.
MRS. PHŒBE LATIMER,	Miſs Pope.
LADY PARAGON, —	Miſs Farren.
PENELOPE, — —	Miſs Tidswell.

Servants, &c.

Time, that of the Repreſentation.

Scene, Sir Jeffery Latimer's Country Houſe.

THE

THE NATURAL SON: A COMEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE *a Library.*—Mrs. Phœbe Latimer *discovered at a table with books, reading.*

Enter Penelope, *after gently tapping at the door.*

MRS. PHOEBE.

WHO's there?—Come in, Mrs. Penelope!—Come in without ceremony.

Pen. I beg pardon for disturbing you, Madam; but my Lady ordered me to bring her a book out of the library.

Phœbe. What book does Lady Paragon wiſh to have?

Pen. Any that comes firſt to hand, French or Engliſh.

Phœbe. Is ſhe fond of reading poems?

Pen. If they are moving.

Phœbe. A Lady's productions, I doubt, are not ſo apt to move, elſe I ſhou'd recommend this Collection.

Pen. A Lady write poems! I wonder any Lady will do ſuch a thing, 'tis ſure deſtruction to the complexion.—Doctor Calomel ſays, a lady, to preſerve her beauty, ſhou'd not even think; he has wrote a book purpoſely to diſſuade people from reading.

Phœbe. Every book he writes will do that. So far however I ſubſcribe to his maxims, as cautiouſly to engage in any work of intenſe hot thinking, leſt the fire of the imagination ſhould force its way into the face, and the flag of the roſe be made to predominate over the wreck of the lily.

Pen. Then, as ſure as can be, that's my Lady Paragon's reaſon for employing Mr. Bluſhenly to read to her.

Phœbe. So, ſo! ſhe employs *him*, does ſhe?

Pen. Oh yes, Ma'am, Mr. Bluſhenly ſits with my Lady, and reads to her by the hour.

Phœbe. Humph! then depend upon it 'tis not to ſave her eyes that ſhe employs Mr. Bluſhenly; I rather think it is to ſatisfy them.

Pen.

Pen. Mr. Bluſhenly is a very handſome man, to be ſure.

Phœbe. You think ſo; and you are generally of your Lady's way of thinking, are you not?

Pen. 'Twou'd be no diſparagement to my taſte, if I were.

Phœbe. On the contrary, Mrs. Penelope, your Lady and my niece is a profeſs'd admirer of beauty, ſo great an one, that ſhe admires even herſelf;—ſhe may like to gratify her ears as well as her eyes by employing Mr. Bluſhenly: ſo, now that we have accounted for two of her five ſenſes in the intereſt of the reader, we need not ſeek for other reaſons, Mrs. Penelope, why you ſhou'd carry this book to the Lady;—and why I ſhould intercept the Gentleman from following it.

Pen. A malicious thing! ſhe's in love with him herſelf. *(aſide).* [*Exit.*

MRS. PHOEBE *alone.*

Theſe confidential *commies* of the toilette are ſure to talk the language of their principals. Not that I ſuſpect my niece of an attachment—that's not her paſſion; vanity and variety is her game.—Then the condition of poor Bluſhenly keeps him back; a dependant, a foundling, deſtitute of every thing but what the Graces have beſtowed; Nature his only parent, Charity his nurſe, and the wide world his inheritance.

Enter Bluſhenly, *and bows.*

Mr. Bluſhenly, good day to you!

Bluſh. Your moſt obedient, Mrs. Phœbe; always amongſt your books! ever at the toilette of the Muſes!

Phœbe. Yes, Mr. Bluſhenly, my beauty-waſh is cull'd from the bloſſoms of Parnaſſus; Truth holds the glaſs, Nature gives the grace. The mind, the mind, Mr. Bluſhenly, muſt be cloathed, and here is its wardrobe; 'tis with that we attract the regards of the man of ſenſe, with that we hold commerce with the worthy: miſconſtrue not my expreſſion; the ſoul, young gentleman, the ſoul is of no ſex.

Bluſh. I am ſorry for it, Mrs. Phœbe; for I have been apt to think all its ſofter attributes were of your department. Admit your doctrine to be true, and what becomes of the good old proverb, "Love begets love," if there be no ſex in the queſtion?

Phœbe. I like your proverb, I admit your proverb, I admit it in its full force, Mr. Bluſhenly: there is not a poſtulatum in philoſophy I had not rather give up, than have you think for a moment that theſe tender attentions can be beſtowed upon an unthankful heart.

Bluſh. Oh the vengeance! what is coming now? *(aſide.)*

Phœbe. They are not loſt, believe me: not a tear that ſprings in your eye, not a ſigh that eſcapes from your breaſt, but generates in mine a congenial affection.—I appeal to what paſs'd laſt night whilſt I was at the harpſichord: you may remember the cantata was Parthenia's encouraging addreſs

addreſs to her baſhful lover: I notic'd the looks you gave me whilſt I was ſinging; I felt them, you might perceive I did; they gave a meaning, an expreſſion to the cadence: it might not reach perhaps to barbarous ears, but I am perſuaded, Mr. Bluſhenly, it came home to your's.

Bluſh. The ears, Madam, are the moſt dangerous avenues to the heart; your ſex, as well as mine, have found them ſuch to their coſt.

Phœbe. The human voice, Mr. Bluſhenly, was not beſtowed as the mere organ of ſpeech, but as the oral index of the ſoul.—You have a ſweet voice, Mr. Bluſhenly; and what a recreation to my ears, after being tortur'd with the crack'd untuneable trumpet of my brother, Sir Jeffery Latimer, the hoarſe hunting-horn of Jack Huſtings, and the quarter-ſeſſions yell of our neighbouring country ſquires, to hear you ſpeak!—Thanks be to the times! theſe indigenous barbarians are in the way to be exterminated by taxes, as the Indian ſavages have been by rum.

Bluſh. Upon my word, Mrs. Phœbe, your partiality puts me to the bluſh.

Phœbe. And it becomes you; bluſhing becomes you: not that I approve of diffidence in exceſs, the leaſt reſemblance of deſpair; no, on the contrary, I would encourage hope, I would cheriſh even ambition.—There is one in this family, Mr. Bluſhenly, warmly impreſſed in your favour: let not diſtance of condition, nor the inſcrutable myſteriouſneſs of your birth, put you out of heart; you

have qualities that can counterbalance fortune; and you have a friend at hand, who bears you much good-will, more than you are aware of; more than it becomes her to expreſs—more, perhaps, than ſhe can expreſs—Oh! I ſhall bluſh to death!

Enter Lady Paragon *reading.*

LADY PARAGON.

" *O'er her ſoft cheek conſenting bluſhes move,*
" *And with kind ſtealth her ſecret ſoul betray;*
" *Bluſhes, which uſher in the morn of love,*
" *Sure as the red'ning eaſt foretels the day.*"
(AIKIN.)

—Thank you for your female poet! thus we women write.—Bluſhenly, have you aired my lapdog? that's all you men are fit for.

Phœbe. How long has Lady Paragon been of that opinion?—Vexatious and perverſe! *(aſide.)*

Lady P. Her Ladyſhip has been of that opinion long enough to change it—half an hour.

Phœbe. I thought it wou'd not be your laſting creed.

Lady P. Ah no, no, no! Woman's a riddle, my good aunt, and ſo is love: to love and be a woman, that's not well; to be a woman, and not love, that's worſe.—Here, Bluſhenly, put this book in your pocket, and come and read to me whilſt I dreſs myſelf.

Phœbe. Lady Paragon, are you aware of what you ſay?

Lady P. Not always; but I think I bade him come and read to me whilſt I am at my toilette; by which means I divide my attentions between mind and body, and keep peace with both parties: out of two offices I think I have civilly offered him the beſt.—She's in a horrid humour. *(aſide.)*

Phœbe. Well, niece, theſe may be modern manners: for my part, I ſhould think you have already beſtowed pains enough upon your perſon for one day.

Lady P. True; but I dreſs and undreſs myſelf, as a child does her doll, for amuſement.

Phœbe. And do you invite young gentlemen to be preſent on thoſe occaſions for amuſement too?

Lady P. No, I do it for his good: when he ſhall ſee what frippery a woman is made up with, what a paſticcio of gauzes, pins, and ribbons go to compound that multifarious thing a well-dreſs'd woman; why then—why then—what was I going to ſay?—he'll find that modern beauty is but haberdaſher's ware; and if he ever had any gallantry (which I very much doubt) he'll be cur'd of it at once, and you may lead him up and down the houſe like a tame philoſopher.—Is n't it ſo, Bluſhenly?

Bluſh. I hope I ſhall never forget myſelf, when I approach your Ladyſhip or Miſs Phœbe.

Lady P. Look you there, now; did n't I tell

you he was fit for nothing but to air a lady's lap-dog?

Phœbe. I perceive you are in one of your rallying humours, and want to be rid of me.

Lady P. Not I, upon my life!—part not in that opinion: I talk nonſenſe only to drive away ſpleen; be aſſur'd I never was in a more melancholy mood in my life.

Phœbe. I am ſorry, niece Paragon, your father's family is ſo dull to you.

Lady P. Miſconceive me not; I have every thing I want, but one, and without that I ſtarve in the midſt of plenty.

Phœbe. And what is that one thing wanting, pray now?

Lady P. Flattery: ſimply the food of flattery; not a full meal, that is nauſeating, but evermore a little reliſh now and then: truth is the daily bread, the ſtaff of life, flattery the ſalt.—As for this moping mortifying thing, I can make nothing of him; a way-poſt has more converſation.—"I "hope I ſhall never forget myſelf, when I ap-"proach your Ladyſhip or Miſs Phœbe."—Oh you unaccountable creature! may I be further, if he has ſaid one flattering thing to me, ſince in the houſe I have been.

Bluſh. Nor ever ſhall attempt it: fine men may make fine ſpeeches, a flattering beggar only ſhews his mind is as mean as his condition.

Lady P. Nay, if you talk ſentiment to me,

Bluſhenly,

Bluſhenly, you'll ſet me a crying; hands off from that edg'd tool, if you love me. Sentiment in the country is clear another thing from ſentiment in town: in my box at the Opera I can take it as glibly as a diſh of tea, down it goes, and there's an end of it; but in walks of willows, and by the ſide of rivulets, there's no joke in it; I'm undone if I hear it by moon-light.—Of all things in the creation I hate pity.

Phœbe. Did I ever hear the like? Pity is the characteriſtic of our ſex.

Bluſh. Right, Madam, it is the ſiſter of Love.

Lady P. Well, and if it is, becauſe I take one of the family, is that a reaſon I ſhou'd maintain all the relations?—Heaven defend me from pitying any thing above a lap-dog or a monkey!

Phœbe. Oh for a ſhame! wou'd you throw that away upon a brute which is due to your fellow-creatures?—Believe me, Mr. Bluſhenly, I have a heart for pity, and your misfortunes have a ſhare in it.

Lady P. O lud, lud, lud! I wou'd not pity him for the world; I wou'd not do him ſuch an injury; for as ſure as can be, if I pitied I ſhou'd love him; and if I lov'd him, all the world wou'd pity him.

Bluſh. Envy him, you ſhou'd have ſaid: how any man belov'd by Lady Paragon can be an object of pity, is a myſtery paſt my finding out.

Lady P. That may well be, and no great myſtery neither; as for my lovers, they are in general the

the merrieſt gayeſt creatures in nature; for, as I ſeldom take a liking to any of them, I ſeldom torment 'em; but if ever that happens, woe betide 'em! no cat ever tortur'd a mouſe as I perſecute the poor dear miſerable creature.—So now you are fairly warn'd, Bluſhenly; and if you run into a trap, you run with your eyes open. [Lady Paragon *is going, and ſtops at the door.*] Well, I'm going—If you are diſcreet you will not go with me—but if you are determin'd to venture, here lies your way.—What ſay you? will you venture?—Aunt Phœbe, your ſervant. [*Exit.*

Phœbe. Mr. Bluſhenly, let me adviſe you—you ſee what a fantaſtical thing it is—I have ſomething to impart to you.—Nay, if you are reſolv'd—go—I renounce you—I commit you to your folly.—Oh! I cou'd tear out her eyes! I am betray'd, abus'd, inſulted.

[Bluſhenly *during theſe ſpeeches ſtands ſilent, and in apparent ſuſpence; at length haſtily eſcapes, and follows* Lady Paragon.

Enter Sir Jeffery Latimer.

You have a notable wiſe head of your own, have you not?—Cackling like an old gander, with but one goſling to your back, and then to ſet that fox, dropt in a bag at your door, to keep it.

Sir Jeff. Why, what the plague's the meaning of all this?

Phœbe, The meaning is, that, not content with what Nature did for you, you will be a fool of your

your own making.—The meaning is, that you have rear'd, educated, father'd this *Terræ-filius* to bring heirs to the Latimers, children of nobody, and grandchildren without a name.

Sir Jeff. What wou'd you have me do in the matter?

Phœbe. Send a herald to the moon, from whence he dropt, and ſearch the office there, before you let this foundling quarter arms with a family as antient as the monarchy.

Sir Jeff. Here's an outcry about nothing!—Look out, and ſatisfy yourſelf.—There they are in the garden, innocently plucking a little fruit.

Phœbe. Yes, o' my conſcience, the forbidden fruit—But I'll not look out; I can't endure to ſee them: your daughter's danger brings the tears into my eyes.

Sir Jeff. I believe you are in moſt danger of the two yourſelf.—Never tell me! 'tis all rank jealouſy.

Phœbe. Rank folly, Jeffery Latimer!—But I will be more moderate.—Why did you call him home from the univerſity?—Why did you ſend him thither?—I'll argue calmly with you—Is it not enough, that ſhe has made one unhappy match?

Sir Jeff. Yes; but I doubt that match was of our making, ſiſter Phœbe.—Let her chuſe next for herſelf, and ſhe will have nobody but herſelf to complain of.

Phœbe. Fine arguing!—Brother, brother, you are *ignoramus*, or, as the Poet ſings—

Sir

Sir Jeff. Damn the Poet!

Phœbe. Oaths are no arguments, Jeffery Latimer; mere *brutum fulmen*, as the Logicians have it.

Sir Jeff. Damn the Logicians!

Phœbe. Now I am cool, you are hot!—How often, brother Latimer, have I talk'd to you on the ſubject of paſſion? Have not I told you that the wiſe Antients call anger a ſhort madneſs? You had beſt abuſe them too, had you not?

Sir Jeff. No, no, not in your company; I have too much manners to abuſe the Antients to their faces.

Phœbe. You have no manners, Jeffery Latimer; no one component particle of a gentleman about you, but the pedigree of one: then you ſwear and talk ſo loud, and have contracted ſuch a yell at turnpike meetings and election ordinaries, that, I proteſt to you, if I did not ſee you be-perriwig'd with the mane of a lion, I ſhou'd think by your braying I was in company with an aſs.

Sir Jeff. I wiſh I had the patience of an aſs.—Talk of my perriwig indeed! look at your own.—What are all thoſe flags and ſtreamers but Cupid's artillery in ambuſcade? men-traps and marriage-guns in every curl.

Phœbe. Don't be groſs, Jeffery Latimer, don't be groſs.—I'll not be made the butt of your ribaldry, nor the dupe of your avarice; I'll take my fortune into my own hands, and not leave it as a neſt-egg to hatch cuckows of another feather than my own. You are a barren bird, brother Jeffery; your line is run out, and you are the worm at the end

of

of it; you are the laſt of the Latimers, an evaneſcent quantity, as the Schoolmen expreſs it: you ſtand at the foot of a noble pedigree, like a braſs farthing in a collection of rich medals.

Sir Jeff. And what will you do for my pedigree?—a ſecond deluge cannot ſtop it more effectually.

Phœbe. I'll tell you what I'll do—live to my own liking: I've ſacrific'd the morning of my day to your humours, noon and evening I'll dedicate to my own. [*Exit.*

Sir Jeff. 'Fore Heaven you make a long day of it, if it's only noon with you yet!—Well, David, what's the beſt news with you?

Enter David.

David. An' pleaſe your worſhip, Mr. Huſtings is come to dine with you.

Sir Jeff. My honeſt friend Jack Huſtings! where is he?

David. In the ſteward's parlour, putting the fowling-pieces in order: he has brought a brace of trout of his own hooking, wou'd do your heart good to ſee them.

Sir Jeff. That's well, that's well! fly-fiſhing is in ſeaſon, and then my friend Jack never comes empty-handed.—But I muſt have a word in private with you—ſhut the door.—You and I, David, have kept this ſecret of young Bluſhenly, as we call him, now theſe twenty years and upwards; the

the neighbours think him a bye-brat of my own (for the old ſtory of a foundling dropt at my door gets no credit with them), and the education I have given him, which has been ſuch in all points as I wou'd have given my own ſon, ſtrengthens their ſuſpicions: in all this time, my couſin Frances Latimer, tho' ſhe has liberally maintain'd him in ſecret, has never ſeen him.

David. And, if report ſays true, ſhe is likely to go out of the world without it.

Sir Jeff. So ſhe does but acknowledge him at her death, be it ſo! My laſt letters out of Flanders left her in a very dangerous way.—How long ago is it, David, ſince my daughter's huſband, Lord Paragon, died?

David. A year and a half to a day, next Lammas.

Sir Jeff. 'Twas a happy riddance: and what the world wou'd think a misfortune (that ſhe had no children by him), I account a bleſſing; for I wou'd fain have a grandſon of my own name and family to inherit my eſtate.

David. I thought your worſhip was coming to that point; there is no male living of the name of Latimer, unleſs you call Mr. Bluſhenly ſo, in right of his mother.

Sir Jeff. And what is he but a Latimer? Why have I brought him and Lady Paragon together, think you, but in this very hope?—I have the pleaſure to ſee their attachment advance every hour.

David.

David. I can readily believe it; and a lovely couple they will be as the ſun ever ſaw; a fine gentleman he is, and a kind-hearted and a handſome; no flouter nor fleerer at poor folks, but always humble and obliging: all the neighbours love him, all the poor bleſs him; and, for my own part—but I ſay little; it does not become a ſervant to be prating—I aſk your worſhip's pardon for my boldneſs.

Sir Jeff. David, you have no need to aſk pardon; I conſider you as a friend rather than a ſervant—but we'll talk of this at our leiſure—Get you gone for the preſent; I hear Jack Huſtings at the door. [*Exit* David.

Enter Jack Huſtings.

Ah, Jack! how runs the world with thee?

Jack. Rubs as it runs. How is it, Knight?—give me thy fore-finger; I am come to rumple a napkin with thee.

Sir Jeff. And thou ſhalt be as welcome, my good friend, as to-day and to-morrow into the bargain.

Jack. I know it, I know it well, elſe I would not come.—I have brought thee a brace of trout, Knight; they are the firſt I've taken this ſeaſon, and I'll warrant 'em as pink as a petticoat;—ſhew'd noble play, up the ſtream and down the ſtream:—a cloud in the ſky, a ripple on the water;—here ſtood I; you know my old watch; ſnap's the word—never miſs my throw.—

Haſt

Haſt got a good breed of birds on thy manor this ſeaſon?

Sir Jeff. Tolerable, tolerable, a pretty fairiſh parcel.

Jack. So much the better; I'll come and bruſh the ſtubbles for thee in a week or two's time. I have been putting your fowling-pieces in order, for your armoury was in ſad trim.—How does my dainty little widow and fair Phœbe?—I've a little matter of buſineſs for thee, if I can bring it out.

Sir Jeff. What's the matter now, Jack?

Jack. Burſt it! I don't know what to ſay to it, tho' I came partly o' purpoſe to open a bit of my mind to thee, only other things put it out of my head.—By the way, don't let me forget to remind thee of Tom Trueby's election for verdurer—it comes on next Tueſday—Sir Roger's folks will be there. Tom's an honeſt fellow, and of the right kidney; we ſhall want your voice at the poll.

Sir Jeff. Here's my hand; never flinch my friends; I am ſtaunch for Trueby.—Now go on with your buſineſs.

Jack. Why, I don't know how it is; ſometimes I think I am rather loneſome of an evening, when the days are ſhort, and the roads bad, ſo that my neighbours can't viſit me; then the parſon's dead, and there I'm out of backgammon;—books, you know, books are but dull company; a body is ſoon tir'd of reading.

Sir

Sir Jeff. Certainly; any reſource is better than that; it gives me the hip at once.

Jack. Beſides, I have had a great loſs amongſt my greyhounds, and ſo, do you ſee—I ſometimes think, by way of killing time, to take a wife; that's all.

Sir Jeff. Well ſaid, Jack; and you have a mind to take fair Phœbe, as you call her; 'foregad you will have wife enough, and to ſpare.

Jack. Yes, yes, I am aware of all that; ſhe's a bouncer, I confeſs: but then it is moſtly in winter evenings I have occaſion for ſuch a companion; when fiſhing and ſhooting ſeaſons ſet in I am generally from home.

Sir Jeff. She has the vengeance of a temper.

Jack. Never mind that, mine will ſerve for both.

Sir Jeff. Have you broke your mind to her?

Jack. No, no, that's to come yet; I ſhall be a little awkward and ungain at courting, but I've a recipe for that.

Sir Jeff. How ſo, Jack?

Jack. Why I've got a little ſomewhat by heart out of a book, and can ſay it pretty ſmoothly; if I can bring her to that, I ſhall come tolerably well off—but I hope I ſhall have your good word, Knight: if it is not with your liking, do you ſee, I am off, and no harm done.

Sir Jeff. 'Tis a ſmall compliment to ſay I had rather pay her fortune to you than to a ſtranger, for marry ſhe will; but as for my good word with

her, I wou'd not do you the injury to offer it—There ſhe is in her caſtle; if thou haſt the heart to attack it, march up boldly, the coaſt is clear; but if thou thinkſt it better to fortify with a good dinner, and a flaſk of wine, friend David ſhall give thee a bottle of his beſt, and we'll have a craſh, my dear boy, to ſet thee on thy mettle.

Jack. With all my heart, I like your counſel well; it is an old ſaying, "Women and wine;" but I ſay, Wine and women.

Sir Jeff. Come thy ways with me, then, and we will have a batch at backgammon, to while away the time till David gives the ſignal on the buttery-door.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE *a Chamber.*

Enter Bluſhenly *and* Lady Paragon.

LADY PARAGON.

SO you've eſcaped from the bottle, but there's a worſe danger in wait for you: my aunt Phœbe is out of port, and has ſet all ſails in full chace; ribbons and gauzes ſtreaming at her top, ſignals of diſtreſt virginity on its cruiſe for a conſort.

Bluſh. Is there no looking-glaſs in this houſe that will ſpeak a plain truth to her?

Lady P. Hellebore can't cure her: Don't you know there is nothing ſo fooliſh as the follies of genius, nothing ſo weak as the weakneſſes of the wiſe?

Bluſh. Truly obſerved!—and if ſhe will take the promiſſory notes of that ſwindler Vanity, before the ſolid ſecurity of honeſt Nature, who can help it?

Lady P. Nobody; for let Truth write ever ſo legibly, Love is blind, you know, and can't read it: ſad confuſion in the human intellects that little miſchievous deity is apt to make; and when he aims an arrow at my aunt, he muſt be a ſorry archer, if he does not hit ſo broad a mark.—After all, Harry, what do you mean to do? ſhe is very rich.

Bluſh. And I am very poor, but that's no proof I am very mercenary.

Lady P. She has one ſtrong feature in her favour.

Bluſh. Her ſtrong box, I grant you. Your Ladyſhip ſeems to think money a tempting circumſtance, and ſo it is in the world's opinion; but I am intereſted to know your real ſentiments: ſuffer me to aſk, if for a moment you can put yourſelf in my ſituation, wou'd you marry Mrs. Phœbe Latimer?

Lady P. Humph! that's a home queſtion, and before I anſwer it, I muſt know what your ſituation is.

Bluſh. A thing without parents, and without a name; a waif, a ſtray that your father has taken up upon his manor, and keeps upon the treſpaſs till its beggarly owner perhaps ſhall reclaim it.

Lady P. Hold, hold, hold! you quite miſtake me, you diſtreſs me;—'tis not your circumſtances, Harry, but your affections, that my queſtion points at; and ſure I ought to know the ſtate of that perſon's heart, for whom I am call'd upon to anſwer in ſuch a caſe: reſolve my queſtion therefore, and I will reply to your's.

Bluſh. I believe we had better drop the ſubject.

Lady P. By no means. Am I to ſuppoſe you alike indifferent to all women? that your heart is entirely diſengaged?

Bluſh. I beg there may be no ſuch ſuppoſition made.

Lady P. Am I then to ſuppoſe the contrary?

Bluſh.

Bluſh. Madam!

Lady P. Nay, be ſincere, hide nothing from your advocate in your own cauſe.

Bluſh. I have no cauſe; I will not ſpeak a falſity, and I cannot declare the truth.—Farewell!

[*Going.*

Lady P. Where's the man running?—Come back: muſt I take up that glove, pray, or you? *(drops her glove, which he takes up)*—Stoop, proud ſpirit, ſtoop!

Bluſh. I humbly aſk your pardon. *(tenders her the glove.)*

Lady P. A man of gallantry wou'd have kept it.—Oh! if thou hadſt half an eye, the brains but of a wren, the ſmalleſt grain of intuition in thee or about thee, thou muſt ere this have ſeen and known——

Bluſh. What? tell me what.

Lady P. What! all ye Powers forbid that I ſhould tell thee what!—Go, get thee gone, thou art good for nothing but to put me out of ſpirits.

Bluſh. Turn me not away till you are reconciled:—inſtruct me, I beſeech you, how I am to act with Mrs. Phœbe; for I am diſtreſs'd beyond meaſure.

Lady P. Well, then, if you are diſpoſed for a practice, I'll fight this quarter for my aunt, and you ſhall defend that for yourſelf.—Speak, are you ready?

Bluſh. No, no, no; that will never do.

Lady P. Defend yourſelf, for I am coming on.

—We are now alone, my dear Harry; and as I know you to be the man I may confide in, I ſhall not ſcruple to avow you are the man of all the world I moſt approve and love: a thouſand opportunities have occurr'd for you to diſcover this, but the delicacy of your principle has determin'd you to meet my affection with indifference; I am now reſolv'd to prove if that indifference be real or aſſum'd; the meaſure may ſeem out of character with ſtrict propriety, but love on my part, and backwardneſs on your's, compel me to declare myſelf; and thus I offer you a fond, a faithful, a devoted heart——

Bluſh. Stop, ſtop, for pity's ſake! you put me out of every thing I had to ſay: I tell you this will never do.

Lady P. You'll tell me of your obligations to my family; I anſwer, they are offices that leave us your debtors:—you'll ſay, you are unknown, dependant, deſtitute; therein you humble me, and aggrandize yourſelf; for, with all the nobler ſuperiorities of nature on your ſide, you leave me nothing but a poor advantage on the ſcore of fortune: —as to your ſcruples that reſpect *my father*——

Bluſh. Father! you forget you are ſpeaking for Mrs. Phœbe; you ſhould ſay *brother.*

Lady P. Shou'd I?—O Harry!—Let it paſs however; and now for your anſwer.

Bluſh. I cannot make any anſwer.

Lady P. I beg your pardon, you have anſwer'd me, completely anſwer'd; I never ſaw rebuff more peremptorily given.

Bluſh.

Bluſh. What do you mean? you puzzle me.

Lady P. Then practiſe it again, till you are perfect; and ſince I've got ſo little way on Mrs. Phœbe's ſide, take it yourſelf, and I'll reply for Mr. Bluſhenly.

Bluſh. Excuſe me: I feel myſelf unfit to take up any other character than of the humbleſt of your ſervants, and with all reſpect entreat you to releaſe me.

Lady P. By all means; for, to own the truth, I am not yet prepar'd to act your part with the inſenſibility which it demands.—Farewell!

[*Exit haſtily.*

Bluſh. O cruel, cruel honour! [*Exit.*

Enter David, *introducing* Major O'Flaherty, *followed by two Servants in* Sir Jeffery's *livery.*

David. Pray, Sir, walk in; good Sir, uſe no ceremony: I am but a ſervant, under favour, yet I am bold to ſay every friend of Mr. Bluſhenly's is welcome in this houſe. Thomas!—William!—run about, good lads, till you can find Mr. Bluſhenly—tell him—but I aſk your honour's pardon; you will be pleas'd to ſend your own meſſage.

O'Fl. Make no more words, but tell the young gentleman a ſtranger wiſhes to ſpeak with him.

David. Sha'n't they carry your name, Sir?

O'Fl. I can carry that myſelf; they will be the nimbler for having nothing to burthen them with.

David. Do as you are bid then, and make haſte— [*Exeunt Servants ſeverally.*

What can his buſineſs be with Mr. Bluſhenly? *(aſide)*—I humbly conceive you have had a long journey, Sir; won't you be pleas'd to repoſe yourſelf?

O'Fl. With your leave, I'll ſtretch my legs awhile; I have been ſo long in the ſaddle, that, except two or three tumbles and a roll by the way, I have ſcarce felt my feet theſe three days.

David. Bleſs me! three days in the ſaddle!—Where can he be come from? I wiſh I could get it out of him. *(aſide)*—I preſume, Sir, you are from foreign parts—no offence, I hope.

O'Fl. None in life.

David. It will not out of my head but ſome good luck is to happen this day—He looks like a foreigner. *(aſide)*—Are you laſt from Flanders, may I aſk?

O'Fl. Indeed you may, Sir.

David. He won't plead; what ſhall I do? *(aſide)*—From the city of Liſle, perhaps?

O'Fl. Are you going thither, that you are ſo curious?

David. I have been there, Sir; I ſerv'd a Lady who is ſettled there, Mrs. Frances Latimer.

O'Fl. Sir!

David. Perhaps you know the lady, Sir; I believe ſhe lives there at this day.

O'Fl. I believe not.—And now I hope you are ſatisfied with the information I have given you.

David. I aſk pardon for my boldneſs, Sir; but I have known Mr. Bluſhenly from an infant; the

firſt hands that receiv'd him at the door of this very houſe, were mine: I was in hopes you had brought news of good fortune to him; I ſhou'd have ſincerely rejoic'd at it, for I love him at my heart; every body loves him—but I won't be troubleſome.—Here comes the young gentleman himſelf—

Enter Bluſhenly.

Bluſh. I am told, Sir, you would ſpeak with me.

O'Fl. I ſhall be glad of that honour.—I believe our buſineſs does not want a witneſs; this perſon may retire.

Bluſh. David, leave the room.

David. Sir, Sir! I hope no miſchief; I ſhall be within call. (*aſide to* Bluſh.)

Bluſh. Go, go! ſhut the door. (*Exit* David.)—And now permit me to requeſt your name, Sir?

O'Fl. O'Flaherty, at your command; you may add Major to it, if you are ſo pleas'd.—I have travell'd a pretty many miles, by ſea and land, out of pure love and ſervice to you, young gentleman, if it is you that are called Mr. Bluſhenly.

Bluſh. My name is Bluſhenly.

O'Fl. There's your miſtake, my dear; upon my faith it is not: can't you take my word at once for what I tell you?

Bluſh. I have been ſo call'd from my birth, I believe; and though neither honour nor inheritance appertains to it, I have to hope you will not take one

one name from me till you provide me with another.

O'Fl. You ſpeak as prettily, and as much like a gentleman, as heart can wiſh.—In one word, the true name upon you is Latimer.

Bluſh. Latimer!

O'Fl. To be ſure: did n't I tell you ſo at firſt? for if it is Latimer, look you, how can it poſſibly be Bluſhenly? Believe me at a word, and ſave a long preamble of a ſtory: what grace would there be in my going through the whole catechiſm with you, when we can't agree upon the firſt queſtion?

Bluſh. Tell your ſtory then in your own way, Sir, only be pleas'd to tell it.

O'Fl. Nothing ſo eaſy; ſay which ſtory you wou'd have, and I'll tell it as you like.—You had but one mother, depend upon it, and her name was Latimer, Frances Latimer, of Liſle, a lady I had the greateſt reſpect for in life; a dear generous ſoul ſhe was; a ſaint upon earth, though ſhe made a ſmall ſlip in her youth, and bore you over the left ſhoulder, as the ſaying is; a frolic, nothing more; but it laid upon her mind, which is wonderful to ſay.—Oh! ſhe took on piteouſly about you in her laſt moments.

Bluſh. Good Heaven!

O'Fl. Yes, 'twas mighty good of Heaven; you'll have great cauſe to ſing *Te Deum*, when you ſee what a fortune ſhe has left you.

Bluſh.

Bluſh. What is this you tell me? I cannot doubt but you are ſerious.

O'Fl. I am not given to be a trifler, and if I were, 'twou'd be a ſorry joke to take ſo long a journey for: I have the credentials ſign'd and ſeal'd; you'll have 'em all before you, together with her laſt dying ſpeech, and what ſhe ſaid afterwards in her will.—"Take theſe papers," ſays ſhe to me in her laſt moments, "take 'em, Ma-"jor O'Flaherty, and deliver 'em into nobody's "hands but my ſon's."

Bluſh. And where are the papers?

O'Fl. Where are they! ſafe enough, truſt me for that;—there's a little ragged boy at the hedge-tavern hard by, where I baited my garran, has got hold of my ſaddle-bags, and is bringing 'em here on his back.

Bluſh. Mercy upon me! had you the imprudence to truſt papers of ſuch conſequence to a vagabond boy out of your ſight?

O'Fl. Don't believe it, he is not out of my ſight, for I aſk'd him his name before I truſted him with the bags.

Bluſh. His name! what ſignifies his name?

O'Fl. Nay, if his name don't ſignify, 'tis all the better, for I have forgot it by the way, 'tis no longer upon my memory: but you'll know it all, when the little whipſter comes.

Bluſh. You alarm me beyond meaſure: let us go in ſearch of him. *(going.)*

(David *meets them as they are going out.)*

David.

David. There is a fellow without, who has brought ſome baggage belonging to this gentleman.

O'Fl. There, there! now you'll be eaſy; now what becomes of your alarm?

Bluſh. Shew me to the fellow.

David. I don't know what to make of all this.

(*aſide.*)

[*Exeunt.*

Jack Huſtings *alone.*

Jack. Sir Jeffery has fled the pit, Harry Bluſhenly is a flincher of old, the ladies are off, the whole houſe is a ſolitude, and nothing is left for me but drowning or marrying, and they both go by deſtiny; therefore, if Mrs. Phœbe comes acroſs me, I'll ſay a ſhort prayer, and wait my fate—A-propos! here ſhe is!—

Enter Mrs. Phœbe Latimer.

Mrs. Phœbe, your moſt humble ſervant; I think myſelf fortunate in this meeting.

Phœbe. Really! then I conclude, Mr. Huſtings, you are no friend to contemplation, and do not like your own company: now I am, as the Antients expreſs it, never leſs alone than when alone. —Cou'd you not paſs an hour with a book? the library is open.

Jack. With a book! yes, Madam, I can take up a book, when I've nothing elſe to do.

Phœbe. And what books do you chiefly read, pray?—poetry, hiſtory, philoſophy?

Jack.

Jack. All's one for that; the Racing Calendar, Cock-fighter's Guide, Complete Angler, and the reſt of the claſſics; nothing comes amiſs.—Are you fond of fiſhing, Mrs. Phœbe?

Phœbe. In theory extremely ſo; I can fiſh with Sannazarius all the day long.

Jack. He's a happy man truly; but I cannot ſay I know the gentleman; does he troll, pray now, or fiſh with a fly?

Phbœe. I rather believe with a quill; Sannazarius was a poet of the fifteenth century.

Jack. And that's a wonderful old age for a poet; but fiſhing's a long-liv'd amuſement.

Phœbe. 'Tis a ſolitary one.

Jack. You've hit it, Mrs. Phœbe, 'tis a ſolitary one; and, to ſay the truth, I begin to find I muſt ſeek out a companion to chear my ſolitude, a companion for life, Mrs. Phœbe.

Phœbe. Oh dear heart! if you are in queſt of a wife, paſs on; don't let me ſtop you; you have no time to loſe.

Jack. Perhaps I ſhall go no further.—I have a Lady in my thoughts; not one of your flanting young Madams, but a ſtaid, ſenſible, diſcreet perſon, of a ſuitable age.—I don't chuſe by the eye, Mrs. Phœbe; I aſk for no more than I bring: youth and beauty are not indiſpenſables in my choice.

Phœbe. If you are contented without them, you are the ſooner pleas'd.—And who may the happy lady be, whom you have ſo flatteringly deſcribed?

Jack.

Jack. One you know very well, Mrs. Phœbe; ſhe's not far off.

Phœbe. One of our neighbours?

Jack. One of your family, the ſiſter of my friend, Sir Jeffery; if you know the lady's mind, I ſhall be glad you will inform me of it.

Phœbe. Her mind I know ſure enough, but her perſon I ſhould not have gueſs'd at by your deſcription of it.—I believe I may anſwer for that lady, that ſuch addreſſes, which convey an affront, or any addreſſes from you, Mr. Huſtings, will meet nothing but repulſe.

Jack. That's very extraordinary; for Sir Jeffery told me you was determin'd upon marrying out of hand.

Phœbe. Did he ſo?

Jack. Yes he did; "Marry ſhe will," ſays he; "and to be ſure I had rather pay her fortune to "you than to a ſtranger:" theſe were his very words.

Phœbe. Defile not my ears with the vulgar retail of his impertinent diſcourſe. Sir Jeffery ſhall repent of this inſult.

Jack. Now, if I cou'd but fetch her up with the ſpeech; but, as I'm a true man, ſhe has frighten'd it out of my head.—Come, come, ſweet Mrs. Phœbe, don't be angry with me; you and I have long been friends.—Fair bud of beauty! look upon your enamour'd lover; ſuffer him to enfold you in his arms, to claſp you to his panting heart!

Phœbe.

Phœbe. Keep off! avoid the chamber!—

Jack. One kiſs, one kind, conſenting, reconciling kiſs!— [*Offers to kiſs her.*

Phœbe. Off, monſter!—Are we amongſt woods and wilds, with ſatyrs, or in a civiliz'd ſociety, with men?—Here is no ſcene for Lapithean banquets, thou deſcendant of the Centaurs! The antient Scythians were not more barbarous in their cups than thou art; Rome's monarchy was loſt by violence not more ſhocking than this.

Enter Lady Paragon.

Lady P. Bleſs me, aunt Phœbe, what's the matter?

Phœbe. Matter enough; this ſavage wou'd have forc'd a kiſs upon me.

Jack. Why then, as I hope to be ſav'd, I did it for the beſt.

Lady P. Do you call that your beſt? O fie! —Men are ſtrange animals, and when we women throw out our charms, and look alluring, which you, dear aunt, particularly do this moment, ſuch little fracas will happen. Come, let me intercede; 'twas but a kiſs at moſt, and I never think a kiſs worth fighting for.

Phœbe. Nor I, perhaps, in any other caſe; but he had the ill manners to introduce a propoſal of marriage, by telling me he did not look for youth or beauty in a wife.

Lady P. That's the conſequence of having too many good qualities.—Had you nothing but youth

youth and beauty to recommend you, you had been ſure to have heard of them: fooliſh women always get the fineſt things ſaid to them.—Go your way; take no leave of her, but begone.

[*Aſide to* Jack Huſtings.

Jack. Thou art a dear ſoul: there's more fuſs with theſe old maids than they are worth.

[*Exit* Jack Huſtings.

Lady P. Well, my dear aunt, how do you find yourſelf now?

Phœbe. Something better; but ſtill in a terrible flutter: my heart beats vehemently.

Lady P. Oh yes, theſe men do ſet our hearts a beating; but you ſee he is gone, the raviſher is gone; I hope you will recover by degrees.—I'll ſtay by you till you are ſafe: if he ſhould come back I can ſcream out whilſt you are defending yourſelf; for, let the worſt come to the worſt, he can ſtop the mouth but of one of us at a time.

Phœbe. In my days lovers were on their knees to their ladies for the favour of a ſalute; and the conceſſion of the cheek was not then to be obtain'd without long ſolicitation, tears, and entreaties.

Lady P. Thoſe were fine days indeed; then a lady ſet her favours at ſome price: now ſo many give away their goods for nothing, that they have fairly ſpoilt the market. If Mr. Bluſhenly now—

Phœbe. You do him wrong; in all our intercourſe he never once ſolicited—

Lady P. Oh fie! take care of what you ſay: remember, remember!

Phœbe.

Phœbe. What ſhou'd I remember?

Lady P. The tapeſtry bed-chamber, when you was ſhewing him king Solomon and his concubines in chain-ſtitch. Defend me from theſe modeſt men! your beef-fed country ſquires are nothing to them; they have the will, indeed, but not the wit, to be miſchievous.

Phœbe. Well, well, I ſhan't eaſily be perſuaded out of my good opinion of Mr. Bluſhenly.

Lady P. Keep to that, and you are ſafe: good opinion is one thing, and love is another.

Phœbe. True; yet in ſome caſes they go together.

Lady P. And then they drive at a furious rate truly: when Love holds the whip, Reaſon drops the reins. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE *a Hunting Hall.*

Sir Jeffery Latimer, Bluſhenly, *and* O'Flaherty. *A table with papers.*

SIR JEFFERY.

JOY to you, my dear Harry, all joy attend you! The will's a good will; you have a brave property; your title's firm, pen and parchment can't make a better. I am beſide myſelf with joy; I'll have a jubilee for this month to come; there ſhan't be a ſober man in the county. I cou'd laugh and cry, and be merry and be ſad, or any thing but in my ſenſes.—Come into my arms, my dear, dear Mr. what's your name!

O'Fl. Dennis O'Flaherty is my name. I hope you like it; it has been a pretty while in the family, and I ſhou'd be loth to change it.

Sir Jeff. I ſhall love your name and your nation as long as I have breath. Why, a man of your parts might have married this couſin of mine, and ſnapp'd her whole fortune, if you had not been the nobleſt fellow upon earth.

O'Fla. Where's the nobleneſs of not being a raſcal? I prize the friendſhip of the fair ſex too well to raiſe money upon them. It was my fortune in life to inherit nothing at all; and I have not leſſen'd it: my good name and my good ſword

are ſtill my own, and there is no incumbrance upon either; I have not mortgag'd them to diſhonour, and, with the grace of Heaven, I never intend it.

Bluſh. Mr. O'Flaherty, I wou'd fain thank you; but my heart is too full; time and my future conduct muſt declare my gratitude: whatever may be my good fortune, you, under Providence, are the father of it.

O'Fl. It has been my lot, young gentleman, to meet a great deal of good fortune in the world—belonging to other people, I mean—and 'tis a mighty pleaſant thing to carry up and down, tho' I have never kept any to my own ſhare.

Sir Jeff. Ah, my good friend, 'tis well my couſin Frances fell into honeſt hands; ſhe was a tempting truſt in a diſtant country.

O'Fl. What difference does the diſtance make in my honeſty, or her truſt? Not but I muſt own ſome of your countrymen, who have had their tempting truſts at a diſtance, have remember'd to leave the truſt behind 'em, and bring home nothing but the temptation.

Sir Jeff. That's true, that's true. Oh! that you had heard what a ſpeech I had like to have made one day in parliament on this very ſubject—"Mr. "Speaker," ſays I, ſtarting on my legs, "ſhall I "tamely ſit down?—ſhall I ſit down tamely, Mr. "Speaker?" Wou'd you think it?—paſſion choak'd me, and I did ſit down.

O'Fl. What a pity's that, when a man has

got a full bottle, and can't pluck out the cork!—I'll tell you what, Sir Jeffery, you need not be ſurpriz'd at finding a poor Catholic like myſelf an honeſt man; you take a ready way to keep us ſo, by ſhutting us out of your ſervice.

Sir Jeff. And now, Harry, that you are of the houſe of the Latimers, if it drops in your hands I am clear of the blame.

O'Fl. O' my conſcience, that's well thought of; if there's a gap in your pedigree, old gentleman, you had better truſt to him for filling it up than yourſelf; aye, and let me tell you, you are not a little beholden to the poor dear ſoul that's dead for putting a ſtreak in your ladder, when you was on the laſt ſtep of it: marry! but ſhe made a good job of it, tho' ſhe had only her left hand to work with.

Bluſh. Touch not upon that ſubject! I am to mourn a mother, who, till the laſt hour of her life, never acknowledg'd me; I muſt remember her, therefore, as a benefactreſs rather than a parent.—You, Sir, have ever been a father to me.

Sir Jeff. Take my daughter into council then, and be a ſon to me. You ſee the conditions of your mother's bequeſt; unleſs you marry Lady Paragon you have only a life-holding in your eſtate: Frances, with all her failings, had a family-feeling for the houſe of Latimer.

Bluſh. 'Tis that condition, with other reaſons of equal delicacy, makes me entreat you both to keep this matter ſecret, till I have ſounded the affections

tions of your adorable daughter. I wou'd owe my happineſs to nothing but her free choice and bounty—I beſeech you, therefore, to conceal this event, for a few hours at leaſt, from Lady Paragon, from Mrs. Phœbe, and in ſhort, from all your family, but honeſt David; his friendly anxiety muſt be reliev'd. You will promiſe me this, Sir Jeffery?

Sir Jeff. Twenty long years and upwards have I brooded upon this neſt-egg, and now the chicken's hatcht I mayn't cackle;—'tis a little hard, but I'll do as you bid me.

Bluſh. Major O'Flaherty, I may expect the ſame from you?

O'Fl. To be ſure you may, my dear:—amuſe yourſelf in your own way, ride your own round-about, ſo you do but come to the right point at laſt.

Sir Jeff. Come, Harry, this buſineſs being diſpatched, let us now go and tap the beſt bottle in my cellar to the health of this worthy gentleman, to whoſe good offices we are both ſo highly indebted.

O'Fl. For the bottle, Sir Jeffery, I am your man; for the good offices you ſpeak of, ſpeak no more about 'em; honeſty is due to every man, and how ſhould you be indebted to me for what I owe you?

Sir Jeff. Come, Sir, let me ſhew you the way—
(Going.)

O'Fl. Mr. Latimer, with your leave I ſhall be following you.

Bluſh. By no means—I am at home;—but not Latimer, if you pleaſe, call me Bluſhenly.

O'Fl. Aye, aye, that's true—Bluſhenly—now you go by your wrong name; that's right!—Well, well! let me ſee, I call'd you by your right name, but that's wrong—By my ſoul, between both but it's a very puzzling affair.

Enter Jack Huſtings.

Sir Jeff. Hold, hold, hold! as I live, a very admirable recruit to our party.—Mr. Huſtings, this is Major O'Flaherty; Major O'Flaherty, this is my friend, Mr. Huſtings.—I pray you be known to each other, Gentlemen both! honeſt men don't meet every day.

Bluſh. This is my moment to eſcape.

[*Exit haſtily.*

O'Fl. I am proud to know you, Sir; you bear your credentials about you; there's a paſſport in your countenance that will carry you through every kingdom in Europe.—Sir Jeffery Latimer, your friend here looks as if he could ſay *Bob!* to a bottle as well as moſt men.

Sir Jeff. I'll be his ſponſor, though it were in the dark.—And now, friend Jack, ſhall we drink to the health of fair Phœbe, your future bride?

Jack. Huſh, huſh! if you love me; no more of that, Knight: let the wind whiſtle as it may, if every month in the twelve was November, I'll tuck

tuck myſelf up with a halter, before I'll couple with a wife.

Sir Jeff. Are you ſo ſoon diſhearten'd?—never fear, man; you and fair Phœbe will make it up before night.

Jack. Then I'll give my ſkin to the tanner before morning, for you'll find it on the beam;—why ſhe flouted me in a ſtile as proud as Nebuchadnezzar.

Sir Jeff. And ſhe will be as humble as a trout before this day paſſes over her head, or I'll never venture at prediction again: retain this gentleman in your cauſe, and I'll enſure a verdict in your favour.

O'Fl. Is there any quarrel a-foot? What is the matter, may I aſk?

Sir Jeff. A lady's matter; a ſmall ſuit at matrimony between this worthy gentleman and a maiden ſiſter of mine, Mrs. Phœbe Latimer: the good lady, it muſt be own'd, is rather on the down-hill paſſage towards the vale of years, and has caſt the eyes of her affection on the young gentleman we juſt now parted with.

O'Fl. When one is going down the hill and t'other up, nothing ſo natural as that both ſhou'd meet; but, my life upon it, Mr. Latimer will give her the go-by.

Sir Jeff. Mr. Bluſhenly, you wou'd ſay.

O'Fl. Well remember'd; you put that my book in good time.

Enter David.

Sir Jeff. Now, David, what's the news with you?

David. Strange news, Sir. Mr. Ruefull is coming to viſit you.

Sir Jeff. Ruefull to viſit me! I want faith to believe you.

David. His ſervant is in the houſe; and if you like to ſee a curioſity, Gentlemen, you will order him in.

Jack. Oh, bring him in by all means, David; I ſhould like to ſee the running-footman to a tortoiſe. Who is dead in your houſe, Knight, that old Ruefull is come to ſit up by the corpſe?

[*Exit* David.

O'Fl. Ruefull! Ruefull! ſure I've heard that name before.

Jack. When a miſer or a man-hater is mention'd, Ruefull's name is in every body's mouth.

Sir Jeff. 'Tis a rough ſhell, but there's virtue at the heart of him.—But I ſee the fellow coming—Get yourſelves ready, Gentlemen, for Death is at the door.

Dumps *is brought in by* David.

O'Fl. (Seeing Dumps *as he enters)* Oh the Beelzebub! what's here?—Which of the ſeven deadly ſins begot you? what gibbet have you defrauded of its furniture?

Dumps. I am ſerving-man to Squire Ruefull; I haſten'd in advance, to ſignify the coming on of my maſter.—*Salve, Domine!—Et tu quoque!—Pax in domo!*

O'Fl.

O'Fl. What the plague! which of your evil tongues is that?

Dumps. 'Tis Latin; I learnt it when I ſhew'd the tombs in Weſtminſter Abbey.

O'Fl. Oho! if you come out of the tombs, 'tis no wonder you ſpeak the dead languages.

Dumps. Rectè.

Sir Jeff. When will your maſter be here, fellow?

Dumps. Anon.

Sir Jeff. Hark ye, David, take this mummy into the cellar, and wet his duſt with a cup of October. You'll find better company in my vaults, friend, than the Abbey's.

Dumps. Oh dear, Sir, I was reaſonable merry, till I came into my maſter's ſervice; he is a monument of a man: we ſhou'd have had a terrible journey of it, if we had not luckily fallen in with a black job by the way, and kept company with the corpſe to Exeter Cathedral.

Jack. I muſt be acquainted with this fellow. —What is your name?

Dumps. My name is Dumps, an' pleaſe you.

Jack. How long have you been in Mr. Ruefull's ſervice?

Dumps. Five years by the calendar, five centuries by calculation.—I had indeed the choice of being keeper of a peſt-houſe, but I was fool enough to withſtand the offer; and, all other trades failing, took into my preſent ſervice.

O'Fl.

O'Fl. What other trades have you followed? let us know your hiſtory.

Dumps. 'Tis ſoon told, Gentlemen:—I am the ſon of a ſexton, and work'd at my father's buſineſs in my youth; I then went into the ſervice of a diſſecting ſurgeon, and with my father's help furniſh'd my maſter's academy with ſubjects.

O'Fl. Oh Lord have mercy upon us!

Dumps. When that trade fail'd, I hir'd myſelf out to the Humane Society.

O'Fl. That was the devil of a jump backwards.

Dumps. Many an honeſt gentleman now walks about with breath of my blowing;—but it was too much labour for one pair of lungs; and, by giving life to a drowned Alderman upon a ſwan-hopping party, I contracted a conſumption, and turn'd murder-monger to a morning paper.

O'Fl. Murder-monger! there you are in your old quarters once more.—And what's murder-monger, I would fain aſk?

Dumps. Caſualty-compiler, an' pleaſe you, inventer of murders to amuſe our cuſtomers; but they ſaid I wanted variety in my violent deaths, I made too much uſe of the brewer's dray; ſo they took a tragic poet in my place, and I was turn'd into Weſtminſter Abbey, as valet-de-chambre to the ragged regiment, to bruſh the duſt off the faces of the wax-work; from thence I came into Squire Ruefull's ſervice; and if I take another ſtep downwards,

downwards, it muſt be to the old one, for I can go no lower in this world.

Sir Jeff. Try the depth of my cellar firſt, and then we'll talk further with you: get you gone.—

[*Exit* Dumps.

But I ſee the Ladies coming—let us ſtep aſide, my good friend, and concert our evidence, and then we ſhall agree in the ſame ſtory.

O'Fl. Faith, and that's well thought of; for if the truth is not to be ſpoken, 'tis mighty proper to agree what we ſhall put in the place of it.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Phœbe, Lady Paragon, *and* Bluſhenly.

Phœbe. Mr. Bluſhenly, who is that ſtranger with my brother?

Bluſh. His name is O'Flaherty, an officer in the Auſtrian ſervice.

Phœbe. But what is his buſineſs here?

Bluſh. He comes to announce the death of your relation, Mrs. Frances Latimer.

Phœbe. What do you tell me? Is ſhe dead? this is news indeed:—do you hear this, Lady Paragon? The death of Mrs. Latimer is an event very intereſting to us all.

Lady P. As I had ſcarce the honour of knowing the lady, I cannot ſay I am particularly affected by the event: if any good perſon is made happy by her fortune, ſo far I ſhall be rejoic'd at it.

Phœbe. Why, your father is her heir at law: I wonder you can be ſo inſenſible.

Lady

Lady P. I hope my father has enough without it; there are people in the world I ſhou'd rather wiſh her fortune to.—I recollect, Harry, ſhe was once very good to you, what ſhall I give you for your legacy?

Bluſh. I will not ſell it, becauſe I have never yet had any good luck to diſpoſe of;—but, promiſe that you will ſhare it with me, and, believe me, in that caſe I ſhall find the old proverb true, and half will be much more than the whole.

Lady P. 'Tis done! I agree to it, ſo the partition be reciprocal.

Enter Sir Jeffery Latimer *and* O'Flaherty.

Sir Jeff. Where are the ladies? I've a budget of news for them.——Siſter Phœbe, this is Major O'Flaherty, a friend of our couſin, Mrs. Frances Latimer; I believe his name is not unknown to you. —Major, this is my daughter, Lady Paragon.

[O'Flaherty *bows to the Ladies ſeverally.*

O'Fl. A Paragon indeed! — I am ſorry I muſt put you in mourning, Ladies, and ſtrike theſe fine colours, that become you ſo well; I bring you news of the death of a relation.

Phœbe. I underſtand my couſin Frances is dead.

O'Fl. She is all that, Madam, the more's the pity.

Phœbe. Pity indeed! I fear ſhe was not very fit to die; I hope ſhe had time to repent.

O'Fl. Plenty of time—and to make her will too.

Phœbe.

Phœbe. In that I ſuppoſe you have an intereſt, Sir.

O'Fl. Oh! a very great one; I have the pleaſure to ſee every ſhilling bequeath'd to her own ſon.

Phœbe. Her ſon! her own ſon! Oh monſtrous!

O'Fl. Where's the monſtrous part of it? She wou'd have been a monſter if ſhe had not done it.

Lady P. Do you hear that, Bluſhenly?—our bargain is drawn.

Bluſh. I beg your pardon, I ſhall hold you to it.

Phœbe. I never heard ſhe had a ſon: where is he? what is he? — She was a ſingle woman, how cou'd ſhe have a ſon?

O'Fl. I believe there was a very natural reaſon for it; ſhe was not a ſingle woman in that particular, I take it.

Sir Jeff. Puzzle yourſelf with no more queſtions; —the world ſays, this ſon of my couſin's merits his good fortune; you will ſee him in this houſe; he is near at hand, and only waits to know if it will be agreeable he ſhould preſent himſelf. — Lady Paragon, I hope you have no objection to a viſit from him.

Lady P. How can I, Sir? an agreeable viſitor will always be an acceſſion to our family circle.

Sir Jeff. You will be very fond of him, when you know him.

Lady P. No doubt I ſhall, and before I know him, by your character of him.

Sir Jeff. Have a care of yourſelf, Louiſa; for if you

you ſhould fall deſperately in love, and throw yourſelf away upon the beſt young man in England, you will go near to break my heart—with joy.

Lady P. The Heavens forbid! I would not be guilty of ſuch a thing for the world.

Sir Jeff. 'Tis no matter, in ſpite of all my warning you will do it.

Lady P. Impoſſible!

Sir Jeff. I tell you you will do it; — ſiſter Phœbe, remember I predict it.

Phœbe. Stay till the event happens, brother Jeffery, and then you may ſafely riſque a prediction.

Sir Jeff. What do you ſay in the caſe, Major O'Flaherty, are you with me in opinion?

O'Fl. Oh! moſt clearly; and the more her Ladyſhip proteſts againſt it, give me leave to ſay, the more I am perſuaded of it.

Lady P. That's ſevere indeed, if Ladies are to be taken by contraries.

O'Fl. Ladies like you, Madam, muſt be taken as we can get them; ſuch prizes don't fall to every man's lot: if Sir Jeffery has a mind for a wager, I ſhall be very glad to go ſharer with him.

Lady P. Agreed! what ſhall the wager be?

O'Fl. Any thing but money.

Lady P. I'll put my life upon the ſtake.

O'Fl. Any thing but murder: for your money, I don't value it; and for your life, it is in my opinion above all value.

Lady P. Name your own terms, then; the bet is loſt before 'tis laid.

O'Fl.

O'Fl. Let it be a wedding-favour, then: a cockade to mount in our hats, and a courteſy to wear upon our lips.—Will you ſtrike hands to this?

Lady P. Hands and heart—Bluſhenly ſhall hold ſtakes.

Bluſh. Give them to me, then, and let me ſeal the treaſure thus, and thus. *(kiſſes her hand.)*—When I forfeit this depoſit, it muſt be death that takes it from me.

Sir Jeff. All this does not ſtagger me: I tell you, daughter, you have laid a loſing wager, and ſo good b'ye to you.—Come, Gentlemen. [*Exit.*

O'Fl. I am your Ladyſhip's moſt obedient—I ſhall call upon you for payment; 'tis true I have only half a ſhare, but any half of your Ladyſhip's favours is more by half than any man deſerves.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter David *and* Dumps.

David. Well, Maſter Dumps, how do you find yourſelf now?

Dumps. Gayly.

David. How ſits his Honour's old October on your ſtomach?

Dumps. Bravely.

David. Now you are free of Merryfield Hall; every body that comes here goes thro' a wetting.

Dumps. Bene.

David. 'Tis the cuſtom of the houſe.

Dumps. Floreat!

Enter

Enter Servant, *and ſpeaks to* Dumps.

Serv. Are not you ſervant to the gentleman juſt arriv'd?

Dumps. Who? old Ruefull?

Serv. I don't know his name; but if your's be Dumps, he is calling out luſtily for you in the hall.—Run, and ſee what he wants; for he won't be pacify'd without you.

Dumps. I run! no, if I cou'd have done that, I wou'd have run out of his ſervice long enough ago.—Hang him, earthworm, let him crawl to me; I'll not budge.

David. Huſh, huſh! keep a good tongue in your head, Dumps; here your maſter comes.

[*Exeunt* David *and* Servant.

Dumps *retires to the back ſcene.* *Enter* Ruefull.

Ruefull. Are they fools born, or fools bewitcht, in this houſe? 'Twere better I took lodgings in a belfry, and ſlept to the ringing of bob-majors, than harbour in this academy of confuſion.—Here have I been calling for my raſcal, and every raſcal runs but the right one; half a ſcore tongues to anſwer, not a hand to help: the building of Babel was a Quaker's meeting to it.—Where is this fellow of mine? 'tis plain he has not broken his neck, elſe I ſhou'd have ſtumbled upon his corpſe. Dumps! why Dumps, I ſay!

Dumps. Here am I.

Ruefull. Here am I! hedge-hog:—well, and here I am.

I am. Why don't you move at my call? Are you in the ſtocks? Are you in the conjurer's circle?

Dumps. Very likely, for my head runs round.

Ruefull. Why, you are tipſy; you have been drinking, ſirrah: your eyes are ſet in your head.

Dumps. I hope ſo.

Ruefull. Sot, didn't I warn you againſt this? How often have I preach'd to you on the virtue of ſobriety?

Dumps. Yes, but you made a virtue of neceſſity; you never gave me a chance to get tipſy in your ſervice.

Ruefull. And I'll take care you never ſhall again, ſirrah. I'll muzzle you for this: I'll ſhut you up in the Eddyſtone, upon rotten biſcuit and rain-water, for a twelvemonth.

Dumps. Do; then I ſhall go out of the world in a blaze.—*Vale.* [*Exit.*

Enter Sir Jeffery.

Sir Jeff. What, old acquaintance! are you come amongſt us? Welcome to Merryfield Hall; ſtay with me an hour, or ſtay with me a month, once for all you are heartily welcome!

Ruefull. I am oblig'd to you: it becomes the maſter of the manſion to welcome his gueſts: but when his ſervants do the office for him, they are apt to overact their parts. Your fellows have intoxicated my fool with their weſtern hoſpitality;

and I am as much to ſeek, without him, as a blind beggar without his dog.—I pray you get ſomebody to lead me about the houſe.

Sir Jeff. I will be your ſervant; every body will be your ſervant.

Ruefull. Let it be ſome civil gentleman then, and none of thoſe powder'd coxcombs I met in your lobby. Servants now-a-days dreſs ſo like gentlemen, and gentlemen ſo like ſervants, that the leſs ceremony is with the better ſort: if Harry Bluſhenly is with you, turn me over to him.

Sir Jeff. He'll be happy to attend upon you; I expect him every moment.

Ruefull. I have a fooliſh liking to the lad—but no matter.—Hark ye, friend Jeffery; if you foiſt me into one of your ſtate-beds, with a villainous Dutch device of fair Bathſheba, or the queen of Sheba, to keep me company, I had rather you ſhou'd ſhut me into your old tower, with a ſcreech-owl at my caſement, and a death-watch at my teſter. If you make a ſtranger of me that way, you'll be ſure to keep me ſo.

Sir Jeff. 'Fore George, you've hit it: the chamber in the old tower will ſuit you to a truth—But hold, hold! that won't do, neither—if you ring your bell there, not a ſoul will come to it, was it to ſave your life or their own.

Ruefull. What's the matter with it?

Sir Jeff. 'Tis haunted: Tom Diſmal walks there.

Ruefull. I knew him when I was a boy; he was your

your father's butler: a melancholy man he was; he taught me the hiſtory of the great plague, and the fire of London.

Sir Jeff. He tuck'd himſelf up on the beam, in the great froſt thirty-nine.

Ruefull. He could not do it in a cooler moment. —But look! here comes your young man;—go to your company, and leave us together.

Sir Jeff. You ſhall have your humour; ſo good b'ye to you. [*Exit.*

Enter Bluſhenly.

Bluſh. I am happy to ſee you, Sir; I hope you are in good health.

Ruefull. No, no, child, no ſuch thing: I am never in good health: throw away no time in ſuch ſilly compliments. Shut the door, for your owls in this houſe are broad awake in noon-day.—So, ſo! that's well.—I have taken an idle whim in my head, youngſter, ſince you was at the Hermitage, that I am rather aſham'd of, and therefore, do you ſee, I chuſe to make all faſt before I come to confeſſion.

Bluſh. I believe, Sir, nobody can overhear us, if you have any commands in private for me.

Ruefull. Wasn't it three days you paſs'd at my cottage?

Bluſh. I think it was, Sir.

Ruefull. I dare ſay you thought 'em thirteen; but you play'd the hypocrite well.

Bluſh. Oh for ſhame, Sir! you muſt believe to

the contrary, or think me the moſt ungrateful of all men.

Ruefull. No, no, no, no! I tell you I don't think it.—I have an odd humour of my own, I know I have; but I like you, I have a regard for you, young man; and that's more than I have ſaid to any body theſe thirty years;—I ſuppoſe, if I was better acquainted with you, I ſhou'd be cur'd of my weakneſs.

Bluſh. Perhaps you wou'd, Sir; for I'll not boaſt of my own deſervings.

Ruefull. I like you the better for it, I like you the better for it. I hate profeſſions; I am ſick when I meet a fellow bolſter'd up with bladders, pufft full of his own empty praiſes. I hope you don't think I am fool enough to come here upon a viſit to old Jeffery—Not I, nor to Dame Partlet, his cackling ſiſter, either. He has got his daughter home, has he not?

Bluſh. Yes, Sir, Lady Paragon is part of the family.

Ruefull. A blockhead that he was, to marry her to a gameſter. He deſerves to be hung up by the heels, with a warning paſted on the gibbet to all fathers, mothers, and guardians. Why didn't he give her to you?

Bluſh. Alas! Sir, I had neither father, mother, nor fortune.

Ruefull. What then? you had a better pedigree without parents, than ſhe has with them; and for fortune, what's that? if you was of my way of

thinking, you wou'd not take it was it offer'd to you: why I have got a fortune, youngſter, a great fortune, if that be all, and a great houſe; but *Magna domus magnum malum* is my motto; a hut by the ſea-ſide is the caſtle of my comfort.—I have ſomething to ſay to you on the ſubject of this young woman; but firſt let me have a ſight of her.

Bluſh. She is now taking her walk in the garden; ſhall we join her?

Ruefull. With all my heart—ſhew me the way.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

MRS. PHOEBE LATIMER, *alone.*

IF this ſilly brother of mine was not the ſtrangeſt compound of contraries in nature, I ſhou'd think there was ſome plot in his proceeding; for it ſeems as if he encourag'd Bluſhenly, whilſt he was recommending Latimer; yet he proteſts to me his heart is ſet upon the match: but you may as well teach method to a monkey, as expect conſiſtency in him.—Well met, Sir! I muſt beg your patient anſwer to a few queſtions.

Enter Bluſhenly.

Bluſh. Propoſe them.

Phœbe. What are you doing in this family, Mr. Bluſhenly? are you, or are you not, appris'd of my brother's wiſhes for the diſpoſal of his daughter to the heir of my couſin Latimer?

Bluſh. I am, Madam.

Phœbe. Are you diſpos'd to promote, or to obſtruct, that alliance?

Bluſh. Warmly to promote it.

Phœbe. Then you take a very extraordinary method of doing it, let me tell you:—I can hardly believe Lady Paragon will be the more diſpos'd to give her hand to Mr. Latimer, for the ardor with which Mr. Bluſhenly kiſſes it.

Bluſh. She has hamper'd me; but I cannot diſcloſe myſelf to her yet. *(aſide.)*

Phœbe. I perceive you are embarraſs'd.—Female hearts, young Gentleman, cannot reſiſt ſuch gallantries; there is nothing elſe wanting in your character to render you irreſiſtible.—You muſt not kiſs her hand again, indeed you muſt not.

Bluſh. If it was done to recommend Mr. Bluſhenly, and not Mr. Latimer, ſet me down in your opinion for the meaneſt of mankind.

Phœbe. Whom but yourſelf can it recommend? Nature is your advocate, Mr. Bluſhenly; ſhe wants no help: ſhe has beſtow'd upon you attractions more than enough; no one is ſecure within the ſphere of their activity; I ſpeak upon conviction:—Oh! had you ſo dealt by me! but you are alter'd,

ter'd, you are eſtrang'd from me; you treat me diſdainfully, Mr. Bluſhenly.

Bluſh. For which of my ſins am I to be thus tormented? *(aſide.)* — How ſo, I beſeech you? when have I been thus guilty?

Phœbe. When!—Have you forgot then how, in ſpite of all I cou'd deviſe to ſtop you, you run to the coquettiſh lure of Lady Paragon, like a quail to the call, whilſt the net was ſpreading to entrap you?

Bluſh. Well, Madam, perhaps I cannot defend every little inattention to prudence;—you muſt take me on the tenor of my life; and I truſt it will never happen to me to be found wanting in eſteem for you: as to Lady Paragon, be aſſur'd, I will never oppoſe the preſumptuous addreſſes of a foundling, to the juſt pretenſions of a man of fortune.

Phœbe. You judge wiſely, Mr. Bluſhenly; I commend your reſolution;—ſhe is not fit to be a wife.

Bluſh. She is not fit to be a wife to a Bluſhenly, I confeſs to you: when that name comes into union with a Latimer, it will not be with Lady Paragon, depend upon it.

Phœbe. Now, now indeed I underſtand you;—that was kindly ſaid; that was like yourſelf: you have reliev'd an anxious throbbing heart.—Oh Mr. Bluſhenly, you muſt not kiſs her hand again—Indeed I cannot bear it.—

Bluſh. Be content! every thing ſhall be clear'd up before this day is at an end—At preſent, I muſt

take my leave; but an hour ſhan't paſs before I will ſee you again.

Phœbe. Indeed! ſhall we meet ſo ſoon again?

Bluſh. Without fail—Then I will hold back nothing from you.

Phœbe. Nor I from you; till then farewell! (*Exit* Bluſh.) —— 'Tis done! 'tis ſettled! that important matter is at laſt adjuſted. As for their jeers and jibes, I value them not. I'll draw my fortune into my own hands.—Let me ſee! Twenty thouſand, at five per cent.—a neat income in a cheap country; a retir'd little box, with a ſpare room for a nurſery; a poſt-chaiſe for myſelf, and a nag for my huſband—Why, 'tis affluence; 'tis luxury; 'tis the paradiſe of human life!—Pſhaw! this fellow again!

Enter Jack Huſtings.

Jack. Don't be frighten'd, Mrs. Phœbe! you have nothing to fear: I have ſeen my error, and thoroughly repent of it.

Phœbe. 'Tis well you have, Sir.

Jack. Very true, 'tis a happy reformation—but who can command himſelf at all times, Mrs. Phœbe? Where's the man that can do it? I was ſurpriz'd, taken unawares, paſſion ran away with me like an unbroke horſe: but I have got him under now; I can govern him with a twine of thread.

Phœbe. 'Tis well you can, Sir.

Jack. Very true, Mrs. Phœbe, 'tis a joyful change.—I ſee I am not the man; a lady of your talents

talents can't take up with a country 'ſquire; 'tis not to be thought of—Bluſhenly carries all before him.

Phœbe. Where did your ſagacity collect that, Mr. Huſtings?

Jack. 'Tis not I only that ſee it; all the neighbours talk of nothing elſe. I thought indeed diſparity of years might have ſtood in his way; but I ſee you do not ſtart at trifles, your generoſity has ſurmounted that objection: as for fortune, I know you have a ſpirit above that.

Phœbe. Whether you know it or not, I have that ſpirit, Sir.

Jack. Yes, Mrs. Phœbe, I am ready to bear witneſs to your ſpirit; and, tho' a diſcarded lover, have ſome hopes, by the bleſſing of a good conſtitution, to ſurvive it, and dance at your wedding ſtill.—Happy be the man! he has the merit of admiring you for your youth and beauty—I had the misfortune to addreſs you for your virtue and diſcretion.

Enter Sir Jeffery Latimer, Ruefull, *and* Lady Paragon.

Sir Jeff. Siſter Phœbe, here is an old friend and ſervant of your's, Mr. Ruefull: he is not quite ſo jovial as Jack Huſtings, nor ſo young as Harry Bluſhenly; but, if you like a melancholy lover, I'll pit my friend againſt all England.

Ruefull. Ah, Mrs. Phœbe! a pretty many years have gone over our heads ſince I handed you to your

your berlin from the opera of Griſelda. I was then a young man juſt come home from my travels, and you a fine gay girl in your bloom, juſt ſetting out on your career of conqueſts.—By the ſame token, I remember I broke a glaſs hoop-ring, which it was then a faſhion to wear, into your finger by ſqueezing your hand; I ſhall never forget the pretty flutter it threw you into, when the blood ſtarted through your glove: I penn'd a ſonnet on the occaſion, in elegiac metre, that had ſome points in it; but it did not move; you was ever inexorable.

Phœbe. Such a thing may have paſs'd, but I was too young to carry the impreſſion in remembrance.

Ruefull. Very likely, for I dare ſay your wound heal'd quicker than mine. I retir'd from the gay world ſoon after, where I had no deſire to paſs for a ſplenetic companion amongſt men of pleaſure; ſince when I have made ſome friendſhips with the dead, merely that we may not be abſolute ſtrangers to each other when we meet; however, I have this advantage in it, that I am going to my connections, and you are parting from your's. Not that I would be underſtood to inſinuate that you have any ſymptoms of immediate decay about you, Mrs. Phœbe; on the contrary, I think your air and apparel more gay and juvenile than I ſhould have look'd for in a perſon of your years; and I rejoice to ſee you carry them off ſo much above my expectation.—Truly you are a fine wo-

man

man of your age, a very fine woman of your age ſtill. [*Mrs.* Phœbe *walks aſide in a paſſion.*

Jack. Wormwood, Knight, wormwood! She is broiling with vexation.

Sir Jeff. Hark ye, daughter Paragon, cut her lace, and ſave her ſtays from burſting.

Lady P. Worſe and worſe! Here's Bluſhenly coming; I cannot bear to ſee her ſuffer.—Mr. Ruefull, I ſhall grow jealous, if you make all theſe fine ſpeeches to my aunt, and not let me have my turn. —Go to my aunt, Harry, go; I can aſſure you ſhe has her full ſhare of admiration in this company, and you are throwing weight into the heavier ſcale. —Why don't you do as I bid you?

(*Apart to* Bluſhenly.)

[Bluſhenly *having entered during this ſpeech of* Lady Paragon's, *ſhe makes ſigns to him to go to* Mrs. Phœbe; *which he at firſt miſunderſtands, but afterwards goes and converſes apart with her.*

Ruefull. There is ſomething very ſincere in your challenge, young Lady, I like the manner of it well; and, to tell you the truth, I came hither purpoſely to ſee you; for tho' I am an old fellow with one foot in my coffin, I hope there's no harm if I take a parting peep at youth and beauty before death ſhuts down the lid. I was curious, you muſt know, to ſee you with my own eyes, and hear with my own ears; for had I taken what that idle young fellow there reported upon truſt, I ſhou'd have the ſtrangeſt opinion of you in nature.

Lady

Lady P. How ſo, I pray, how ſo? I ſhould expect he, of all men, would report of me as a friend.

Ruefull. I ſhou'd doubt that, for he made you out to be a miracle of human goodneſs—Now that's a ſhot point-blank againſt all my experience and belief.

Phœbe. Oh! that I had that man's tongue in my pocket!—will nobody ſilence him!

Lady P. You are juſtified in your incredulity; for I ſhall not ſcruple to confeſs, that I am more proud of his partiality, than I cou'd be of the truth itſelf.

Ruefull. That's a fair confeſſion, at leaſt; and if it does not ſerve to convey a very favourable impreſſion of your judgment, it enables me to gueſs at your affections towards the young man at your elbow: and I am perſuaded I ſhall have my old friend Mrs. Phœbe on my ſide, if I wiſh you both happy in each other.

Phœbe. Are you ſo, Sir? are you ſo? Why do you take upon yourſelf to anſwer for me in the caſe?

Ruefull. Becauſe I think you have liv'd long enough in the world to ſee the miſery of unequal matches:—where affections meet, where characters tally, where tempers agree, who regards fortune?

Jack. Not Mrs. Phœbe, I aſſure you; ſhe has a ſpirit above that—you know you told me ſo yourſelf, juſt now.

Phœbe. Who deſir'd you to interfere?

Ruefull. Then their ages, Madam—there, I'm ſure,

ſure, you'll own they're match'd. Now I hold it in abhorrence, and equally a ſin againſt nature in either ſex, were an old fellow like myſelf to couple his infirmities to the youth and beauty of Lady Paragon, or a woman of your gravity to befool herſelf with a ridiculous paſſion for him there.

Jack. Lack-a-day, Sir! Mrs. Phœbe can get over that too.

Phœbe. Who told you what I can get over, or what I cannot get over? I deſire I may neither be quoted for an example, nor referr'd to as a witneſs in theſe matters.—And you muſt give me leave to tell you, Mr. Ruefull, that it is unuſual for ſtrangers like you to interfere in family matters, and take up the concerns of other people's alliances, as if they were their own.

Ruefull. Whether I am officious or not, Madam, time muſt ſhew; but I truſt there is no offence in ſaying, that if this young Lady was my daughter, I would beſtow her on Mr. Bluſhenly, or was he my ſon, I would recommend him to Lady Paragon: this is my opinion, Mrs. Phoebe, and I am ready to back it with my purſe, if it is wanted. I believe I have as good an eſtate as my old friend here, perhaps I might ſay a better, for I have nurſed it pretty carefully, and liv'd upon the gnawing of a cruſt;—'twas my humour, and I had nobody's leave to aſk for mortifying myſelf. I am going out of the world, this young man is coming into it.—If Sir Jeffery will ſtep aſide with me, perhaps I ſhall convince him at leaſt that I did not come here officiouſly, and for nothing. [*Exit* Ruefull.

Jack.

Jack. Who calls this man a miſer?

Lady P. I am in love with him; he has won my heart for ever.

Bluſh. 'Tis a rough humour, but a moſt benevolent nature.

Sir Jeff. Siſter Phœbe, what do you think of all this?

Phœbe. I think it a mere mouthful of moonſhine; true lunatic's diet; the cookery of a crackt brain; froth to feed fools with;—you will find a better legacy in Don Diego's will: the man is in his dotage.

Sir Jeff. A word in your ear.—You are ſtill for Mr. Latimer?

Phœbe. I am.

Sir Jeff. Poſitively?

Phœbe. Peremptorily.

Sir Jeff. Here's my hand, then: my daughter marries Frances Latimer's ſon, or I'll make the houſe too hot to hold her. [*Exit.* *Aſide.*

Phœbe. So far all is ſafe—but I don't like theſe whiſperings—I muſt interrupt their conference.

Mr. Bluſhenly!—Niece Paragon!—You will forgive me, but——

Bluſh. Stay, Madam, let me ſpeak a word in private with your aunt. (*to* Lady Paragon.)—Mrs. Phœbe, you betray yourſelf by this impatience; leave me, if you pleaſe, with Lady Paragon.

Phœbe. Why muſt I leave you?

Bluſh. Becauſe—becauſe you muſt.

Phœbe. Sure!—You're grown very peremptory.

Bluſh.

Bluſh. I make it my condition—my requeſt—will that ſuffice?

Phœbe. Well!—but you'll keep faith with me—you'll remember!—I'm gone.—How provokingly handſome ſhe looks! I can't bear the ſight of her. *(aſide.)* [*Exit.*

Bluſhenly *and Lady* Paragon *remain.*

Bluſh. At laſt we are alone; and I now preſs the moment that decides upon my hope.—This Latimer, whom ſhe ſo anxiouſly expects, whom your father recommends, and who is prepar'd to throw himſelf at your feet, is now in this very houſe.

Lady P. Well, if he is, what then? Nor he nor they have ſupernatural power; and human means ſhall never force me to a ſecond ſacrifice.

Bluſh. Are you ſo reſolute?

Lady P. My heart is pledg'd: you know the holder of it.

Bluſh. Then I have undertaken a hard taſk indeed; for I am to move you for that very Latimer.

Lady P. Come, come, I've found you out: this is a return for my raillery about my aunt's ſtrong box; but, unleſs you can find pleaſure in putting me to pain, I beg you to be ſerious.

Bluſh. I never was more ſerious in my life.

Lady P. Sir!—Mr. Bluſhenly!—I did not think you cou'd be cruel to me.—We never meet again. *(Going.)*

Bluſh. Stop, I conjure you, ſtop!

Lady

Lady P. Why ſhou'd I?—Oh Harry! if you are ſtill ſo blind as not to ſee the openeſt heart in nature, legible by every eye but your's, I'll ſooner do a violence to my ſex's delicacy, by an avowal of my love, than leave it in your power to make a plea of ignorance.

Bluſh. You ſhall not do your dignity that wrong; I ſee and know your heart.

Lady P. You ſee it by falſe lights, you know it by unfair reports; elſe wou'd you treat it as you do?—No, you miſtake a playful ſpirit for a levity of principle; you think me a coquette, who likes and diſlikes by caprice, and whoſe favours, like falſe coin receiv'd in payment, you are impatient to paſs off to any other dupe that will take them.

Bluſh. I were a brute without reaſon, cou'd I ſo judge of you. The playfulneſs of your ſpirit ſhews the purity of your nature; a heart like your's wou'd make an angel's face ſuperfluous; I think with too much reverence of your virtue to recollect that you are beautiful.

Lady P. For which then of theſe two perfections do you reject me? Is it my virtue, or my beauty you revolt from?—Inconſiſtent flattery! Who throws away what he admires? who draws back from proffer'd happineſs? either too proud to receive a bleſſing, or too ſuſpicious to believe it is intended.

Bluſh. I neither have the pride nor the ſuſpicion you deſcribe; and I only regret there is any thing between us, which you have not the pleaſure of beſtowing.

Lady

Lady P. Why then do you aſſume a diſintereſtedneſs which cuts me to the heart? and with a cold air of prudence, as fruitleſs as it is cruel, attempt to turn inflexible affections from yourſelf to Latimer?

Bluſh. Becauſe I am that Latimer.

Lady P. What do I hear?

Bluſh. Oh, let me claſp you to my heart! words are too weak to tell you how I love.

Lady P. Oh! what a head for ſtratagem is thine! —a notable experiment, to prove that it is day by the light of the ſun!—Oh, Harry, Harry! if I cou'd play the hypocrite, I wou'd revoke all I've ſaid, and turn your own game upon you:—but I have ways enough to be reveng'd; and, as you have been ſo very backward in diſcerning a Lady's advances, I'll take care you ſhall be as ſlow in making your own: you have ſeiz'd a ſtrong poſt by ſurprize, but I have other defences in reſerve; and, with my aunt Phœbe in front, I can ſtill protract a ſurrender.

Bluſh. Whilſt you look upon me with thoſe eyes of love, I may defy your menaces, becauſe I have your mercy to depend upon.

Lady P. Well, I proteſt you are inſufferably vain.

Bluſh. And I ſwear you are inſupportably handſome.

Lady P. Oh! then you are come down from your high-flown ſentiment to a little plain ſenſe at laſt: you have drawn off the angel, and the woman appears: I am very glad to find that I am not quite too good to be flattered.

Bluſh. My ſoul doats on you: I adore you.

Lady P. Kneel, then, and worſhip at a diſtance. —I ſtand for privilege.—There lies your retreat; I keep this for my own.

Bluſh. Will you break parole with me? No, you have ſurrendered, and I'll carry off my priſoner, or periſh.—Come with me, lovelieſt of women, come!

Lady P. I don't know that I dare; I ſhall grow afraid of you: I thought to ſtroak a lamb, and I've unchain'd a lion. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mrs. Phœbe *and* O'Flaherty.

Phœbe. There, there, there! did you ſee that, Sir?

O Fl. Oh! yes; mighty cloſe truly, mighty cloſe.

Phœbe. As Mr. Latimer's friend, methinks you can't be very well pleas'd with this diſcovery.

O'Fl. No indeed, and I am ſurpriz'd to ſee you bear it ſo patiently; but you are of a ſweet gentle nature, I perceive: and, as a reward for your patience, I can ſafely promiſe you ſhall hear no more of Bluſhenly after this night.

Phœbe. How ſo, how ſo? make me underſtand what you mean to do.

O'Fl. Never aſk about it: never vex your lovely ſelf—we have a way of our own in Ireland.

Phœbe. Explain yourſelf, I conjure you.

O'Fl. Why, you know there is ſuch a thing in the world as a poſt-chaiſe—Well!—and here you

live upon the coaſt, hard by the ſea, do you mind me?—Very well!—Mighty convenient, you'll allow, for ſhipping off contraband commodities, alias live-ſtock, for the continent.—Now if we can catch this young ram by the horns, and ſmuggle him into Dunkirk, we ſhall ſtop his breed at home, and nobody the wiſer.

Phœbe. Horrible! wou'd you take the young man out of the kingdom? wou'd you murder him?

O'Fl. Why that ſhall be juſt as you like; it would make his voyage the ſhorter.

Phœbe. Barbarian! I'll not ſuffer it: my blood chills with the idea.

O'Fl. Oh then take another recipe to warm it: Elope with him yourſelf.

Phœbe. Myſelf!

O'Fl. 'Tis done every day; the moſt effectual mode in nature to pique the jealouſy of the young Lady at home; ſhe'll marry Latimer, out of revenge, in a week: the only thing is, to put a ſmall force upon your modeſty; if you have friendſhip enough for your niece to do this, all difficulties are over.

Phœbe. Do you propoſe this in ridicule, or in inſult to me?

O'Fl. Nay, if it ſhocks the delicacy of your nature, away with it at once; and, to ſay the truth, I was afraid your modeſty cou'd not put up with it. What will become of her reputation? ſays I to Mr. Latimer. Wou'd you put a fair innocent

creature ſide by ſide with a tempting young rogue in a cloſe carriage? I'm aſham'd of you, ſays I. — Oh! I rattled him off roundly, for dreaming of it; for I was of your way of thinking, that it wou'd be beſt to knock him on the head at once, and ſave miſchief.

Phœbe. Murder to ſave miſchief!—Murder my reputation rather! incloſe me in the odious poſt-chaiſe! let my innocence be your ſacrifice, ſooner than meditate an act ſo horrible: if no means elſe can be devis'd to ſeparate him from Lady Paragon, behold me ready to devote myſelf a voluntary victim to preſerve the honour and the intereſts of my family!

O'Fl. Why then, as I'm a ſinner, there is not a martyr in the calendar can go beyond you.—Oh, ſweet Phœbe, if you were of the right perſuaſion, you wou'd be the firſt ſaint of your name!—Make up your mind, dear creature, for the journey: pack up a few trifles for your occaſions by the way; put a good book in your pocket to keep the foul fiend at a diſtance; for, mind what I tell you, there's no truſting to theſe cloſe carriages: as for holding him in talk about the weather, and the proſpects, and all that, don't depend upon it, for the night will be as dark as a hedge; then there's ſuch a cracking and a rattling with your iron-work, ſcreaming goes for nothing in an Engliſh poſt-chaiſe.

Phœbe. Talk no more of ſuch idle proſpects; I have other reſources than you know of; and

ſhall

ſhall take care to prevent miſchief, both to him, to her, or myſelf. [*Exit.*

O'Fl. Mercy on me! what a fermentation does a little learning raiſe in a female ſkull! No wonder that our fortune-hunters poach amongſt theſe petticoated pedants; they fall into the ſnare like a pheaſant from its perch. [*Exit.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

Enter Ruefull *and* Dumps.

RUEFULL.

GET you gone, ſirrah! I diſmiſs you from my ſervice.

Dumps. Thank you heartily; 'tis the only kindneſs you ever did me.

Ruefull. Leave the room.

Dumps. To leave is to obey—to obey is to ſerve. —You are no longer my maſter, therefore I do not leave the room.

Ruefull. Incomparable impudence!—This is as it ſhou'd be, it feeds my ſpleen, and ſerves to put me out of humour with the world.

Enter Jack Huſtings.

Jack. Who finds fault with the world? I ſay 'tis a good world.

Ruefull. I never ſaid it was not good enough for thoſe who live in it.

Jack. Philoſophers do but mar it.

Ruefull. Fox-hunters don't mend it.

Jack. You have a fellow here in your ſervice of admirable humour.

Ruefull. He is an admirable fellow, if impudence be a recommendation.—I have done with him: he is upon his promotion; if you have a mind for a purchaſe, you have nothing to do but to outbid the gallows, and the lot is your own.

Dumps. Take me whilſt you can have me, good Sir! if you put it by till to-morrow, you will have to ſeek for me at the bottom of the moat;—I ſhall lay this old ſcare-crow of a livery on the bank for a mark: 'twill be in its ſeventh generation when I take leave of it, and every one of my predeceſſors left a family behind to be provided for:—give the devil his due, as the ſaying is, my maſter has ſome credit in this old coat; for 'tis made for all mankind, 'tis the only thing in our houſe that does not go by meaſure.

Jack. And can you find in your heart to part from this fellow?

Ruefull. Parting from Dumps is like the practice of repentance; it coſts ſome ſtruggle to wean one's ſelf from one's vices.—Fare thee well, Dumps!

I wiſh

I wiſh I were certain thou wou'dſt never come back to me; for if thou doſt, I ſhall ſurely take thee in, and 'twou'd be hard if the plague cou'd be had above once in one's life. [*Exit.*

Jack. Well, Dumps, what are you pondering upon?

Dumps. A reprieve at the gallows is a very ſerious thing.

Jack. After all your changes in life, you have had one change for the better; I have no melancholy faces in my family.—You muſt have led the life of a dog in this old fellow's ſervice.

Dumps. Bad enough; but if I had little food, I had leſs work; if I had no merriment, I had no care. A man may live in a priſon till he likes it: when I was with my maſter, I pin'd for liberty; now I am looſe, I long to go back again. In ſhort, I don't know how it is; I had made up my mind, and, with your leave, I'll return to my execution. —You don't know that old gentleman's character, Sir.

Jack. I know what he paſſes for in the world's opinion—a miſer and a man-hater.

Dumps. Miſer enough I own he is, and has gone near to ſtarve me; but then he ſtarves himſelf, ſo I can't complain of him for that:—a man-hater he is, I don't deny it; but then he does good to people out of ſpite. He can be charitable enough, whilſt other folks take the praiſe of it; find him out, and you are ſure to loſe his good-will. He was a rake in his young days.

Jack. Was he ſo? pr'ythee, if thou can'ſt, tell me ſomething of his hiſtory.

Dumps. There's a Lady of family (I don't know who ſhe is) that he behav'd very ill to: it lies on his conſcience, and has turn'd his temper to vinegar: ſhe had a child by him—when he went abroad, and left her;—he buried himſelf many years amongſt the mountains, where the Swiſs live, as I believe.

Jack. Is the child alive?

Dumps. I know nothing of that: ſo much I know, that he has been making enquiries ſince I've been with him, but all to no purpoſe, as far as I can find. He has a brave eſtate, and a fine houſe upon it, but he lives in a poor little cottage-like place, with an old woman and myſelf, and ſees nobody. Folks think him a white-witch or wizard, and are afraid to come near him.

Jack. He ſeems to have taken ſtrongly to our young man here.

Dumps. Mr. Bluſhenly, you mean?

Jack. The ſame;—he is very earneſt to promote a match between him and Lady Paragon.

Dumps. Is he ſo? why then you muſt excuſe me, Sir, I can't think of leaving him: if he is Mr. Bluſhenly's friend, I'll follow him whilſt there is land or water to carry me, and ſo I'll tell him;—here he comes.—*Peccavi, Domine!* Maſter, forgive me!

Enter

Enter Ruefull *and* Sir Jeffery.

Ruefull. Get thee gone, blockhead, get thee gone! I have no time to forgive thee.

Dumps. Rather ſay, you have no leiſure to hold out.

Ruefull. I have better buſineſs to mind.

Dumps. 'Tis done with a word: pray, Sir, be quick about it, for repentance comes but ſeldom, and 'tis not good manners to keep a ſtranger waiting.

Ruefull. Well, well, well! I will keep thee on, if it be only to torment thee; thy pardon ſhall be thy puniſhment.—Away with thee!

[*Exit* Dumps.

Sir Jeff. Friend Jack, we are upon buſineſs.

Jack. A moment's patience!—Mr. Ruefull, give me your hand; nay, good Sir, give it me!—I honour you from my ſoul: I beg pardon for the falſe opinion I have had of you; I am a country-bred fellow, 'tis true, but I have an honeſt heart, and a warm one—ſo Heaven bleſs you! that's enough. [*Exit* Jack.

Ruefull. Ahem!—What's the matter with my eyes?—A plague upon the fellow, ſay I, for putting me in humour with mankind.—Go on with your ſtory—

Sir Jeff. I educated him in all points as my own ſon.

Ruefull. And at your own expence?

Sir

Sir Jeff. No, I was privately ſupplied by his mother for that purpoſe.

Ruefull. Thank you, Sir! thank you heartily for that; I ſhou'd elſe have been compell'd to confeſs it was a benevolent action.—And who is his mother?—Stop, though! if it is one of your ſecrets, keep it to yourſelf.

Sir Jeff. It has been a ſecret, an inviolable ſecret, from the day of his birth to this hour;—it is now no longer ſo; for the death of his mother, who was a kinſwoman of mine—

Ruefull. How's that? what do you ſay? a kinſwoman of your's!

Sir Jeff. A near one; my couſin, Frances Latimer—

Ruefull. Sir!

Sir Jeff. What alarms you?

Ruefull. Is Bluſhenly the ſon of Mrs. Fanny Latimer? are you ſure of this? have you no trick in it?

Sir Jeff. Trick! you may ſee her will.

Ruefull. Shew it to me.—Had ſhe no other ſon, no other child but this? anſwer me this.

Sir Jeff. No other child.—After putting him into my hands, ſhe left England, ſhut herſelf into a convent at Liſle in Flanders, and led an exemplary life in retirement from the world, tho' ſhe wou'd never be induc'd to acknowledge her ſon, or diſcover his father.

Ruefull. Let me ſee the will, let me ſee the will.

Sir

Sir Jeff. Come into my cloſet with me, and you ſhall ſee it.

Ruefull. Shew me the way.—Heyday! what ails me? how my head ſwims!—Give me your arm. —So, ſo! 'tis better.

Sir Jeff. Bear up, my good friend; I ſee you are agitated by this diſcovery.

Ruefull. Do you think ſo? Can't an old man be ſick ſuddenly, but you muſt ſpy a myſtery in it? —Pſhaw! [*Exeunt.*

Enter Lady Paragon *and* Bluſhenly.

Lady P. A ſituation of more hazard than mine cou'd not well be; for I was courted by my admirers, and neglected by my huſband. Oh! let no woman wed a gameſter! human miſery cannot exceed it.—And now, my dear Harry, that I have given you a portrait of myſelf, the beſt I can ſay for it is, that it is a faithful likeneſs; ſome faulty tints there may be, which the pencil of vanity has thrown in, but they will fly off in time; and I flatter myſelf it is no where daſh'd with the dark ſhades of guilt or deformity: as for the colours which love has given it, they will never fade in your keeping, for they are burnt in with fire, and can only periſh with the piece itſelf.

[*They embrace.*

Enter Mrs. Phœbe Latimer, *as they are embracing.*

Phœbe. I can ſupport this no longer.—Mr. Bluſhenly, you are a traitor! Lady Paragon, you are—I won't ſay what—I renounce you!

Bluſh.

Bluſh. Recollect yourſelf, Madam! ſpeak without paſſion, and I will anſwer you without reproach.

Phœbe. No, Sir, I will not ſpeak without paſſion, nor will I enter upon any explanation with you.—There is a couching lion in your path, ready to ſpring upon you, and deſtroy you both: an awful ſecret is in my keeping, nature extorts it from me; and before you ruſh into the crime of inceſt, know, young man—and tremble whilſt I tell it—you are her father's ſon.—How now! have you no feeling to your ſituation, that you receive it thus calmly? If you can doubt it, I'll produce my brother, and he ſhall confirm it to your faces.

Lady P. Stay, Madam, if you pleaſe; there is no occaſion to ſpread our family diſgrace any further.

Phœbe. How you both ſtand!—Lady Paragon, I'm aſtoniſh'd at your inſenſibility: you don't even change colour.

Lady P. That's much indeed; for I'm very apt to bluſh for thoſe who aſſert a falſehood to my face.

Phœbe. A falſehood! what do you inſinuate?

Bluſh. Patience, I beſeech you, and let us ſave you, whilſt we can.—Your zeal for Mr. Latimer hurries you too far, when it puts you to invention and the abuſe of truth.—In ſome degree I take the fault upon myſelf; for I cou'd ſooner have told you that his intereſt in this Lady's affections ſtands on the ſecurity of honour, and does not want the aid of fiction—I am that happy man! I am that Latimer!

Phœbe.

Phœbe. You! you!

Bluſh. O'Flaherty brought the proofs; Sir Jeffery will impart them to you.

Phœbe. Then I am ruin'd and undone!—I have expos'd myſelf to ſhame and deriſion:—I am ſinking with confuſion!

Lady P. No, my dear aunt, you ſhall not ſink; we are your friends, and we will hold you up.

Phœbe. Impoſſible! I never can recall what I've ſaid.

Bluſh. Nor ſhall you; for if time ſhall ever extinguiſh in your breaſt its partial affection for Bluſhenly, gratitude ſhall continue to record it in the heart of Latimer: therefore I pray you be at peace with yourſelf. What now is done, is done in ſecret; and whoever, in my hearing, dares to vent a ſneer at the aunt of my Louiſa, makes an enemy of me.

Phœbe. I thank you; you both are truly generous;—but I am much agitated, and wiſh to retire to my chamber.

Lady P. No, no, perſiſt, if it be poſſible!—My father will ſoon be here; meet him with congratulations; meet the whole family!—Look! here comes O'Flaherty.

Phœbe. The man of all the world I cannot meet; he knows my weakeſt thoughts: ſave me from this meeting, if you have pity for me.

Enter O'Flaherty, *and is met by* Bluſhenly.

Bluſh. Stop, my good friend!—and, before a word can paſs your lips, let me exact from you, as a ſoldier and a man of honour, to look at theſe Ladies,

and

and if there be here preſent one, to whoſe thoughts in ſome weak moment (for we all have ſuch moments) you have been privy, bury them in generous ſilence for ever, and approve yourſelf deſerving of the favours of the ſex, by your gallantry in concealing their foibles!

O'Fl. I underſtand you, Sir, perfectly; and when I pledge my honour, I pledge that, which neither to man nor woman has been ever forfeited—ſo there's an end of the matter.—Now be ſo good as to ſay which name you are pleaſed to be call'd by, and whether I am to give you joy as Mr. Latimer; or how much longer I am to keep it ſecret.

Bluſh. You are fairly releas'd.

O'Fl. And does your Ladyſhip bear in mind our wager?

Lady P. I acknowledge it loſt, and will pay it the firſt moment I am able.

O'Fl. O dear heart alive! what a joy it is to hear you ſay ſo!—but there is a part at leaſt, and the beſt part too, which you can always pay on demand.

Lady P. Well then, if you wiſh it, 'tis before you; ſerve yourſelf.

O'Fl. May the bleſſing of bleſſings light upon your generous heart! *(Salutes her reſpectfully)* May the cheek which I have touch'd be unſtain'd with a tear! And may your lips, which I had not the boldneſs to approach, be the ſacred treaſure of your huſband!—Mrs. Phœbe Latimer, I hope I ſhall not offend, if I offer at the ſame preſumption.—Be confident,

fident, dear Madam, that you have not in the world a more faithful humble ſervant than myſelf!

[*aſide to her.*

Phœbe. I have entire reliance on your honour. I begin to feel the return of tranquillity.

Enter Sir Jeffery Latimer.

Lady P. Bleſs me, Sir, what ails you? You alarm me.

Sir Jeff. Tears of joy, tears of joy—don't be alarm'd!—I am a father myſelf; the feelings of nature are very ſtrong.

Bluſh. What are you ſpeaking of?

Sir Jeff. The ſurprize was ſudden, and overpower'd him; but we have fetch'd him to himſelf: Jack Huſtings open'd a vein—he can turn his hand to any thing.—Here comes the good man!—Now let nobody be in a buſtle; recollect yourſelf, Harry! Let nobody be in a buſtle—Be as quiet and compos'd as I am.

(Ruefull *is led in between* Jack Huſtings *and* Dumps, David *attending behind with a chair.)*

Ruefull. Put the chair in its place again! methinks you are very troubleſome.—(Dumps *puts a bottle of ſalts to his noſe.*) What does the blockhead thruſt his ſalts up my noſtrils for? Keep 'em till my funeral, they'll ſerve to draw tears in your eyes.

Jack. How do you find yourſelf now, Sir?

Ruefull. Exceedingly annoy'd by your officiouſneſs.—Who made you a ſurgeon, I would fain know? Why am I to be blooded like a calf at the whim of a butcher?

Jack.

Jack. You might have died, if we had not open'd a vein.

Ruefull. Might have died!—well, and what might I do better? I have always reckon'd upon one happy hour in life—the hour at the end of it. —Hark ye, Sir Jeffery, aſk your daughter if ſhe reſolves upon marrying that young man by her ſide.

Sir Jeff. Her heart is center'd in that hope—I anſwer you in her own words.

Ruefull. Pray, Madam, let me aſk you why you make this choice?

Lady P. Becauſe I know him, love him, and admire him; his honour, gentleneſs, modeſty, and benevolence, endear him to me.

Ruefull. And is this a world for ſuch a man to live in? With all theſe qualities, what ſort of figure will he make in high life?

Lady P. I ſhou'd be ſorry if a man of your good ſenſe gave into hackney'd invectives againſt high life; I ſuſpect it is the vices of the vulgar, which are precipitating this country to its grave!

Ruefull. It may be ſo; I ſtand corrected. But it is fitting you ſhou'd know there is one objection to your future huſband:—he is the ſon of a humourſome, capricious, old fellow, whom all the world ſets down for a ſnarler and a miſer.—I am his father.

Bluſh. Then nature is a faithful propheteſs: I felt her at my heart.—Give me your bleſſing, Sir! —My benefactor, friend, and father!

(throws himſelf on his knee.)

Ruefull. There, there! *(bleſſes him.)*—I do theſe offices

offices ſcurvily; a fellow of no feeling wou'd make you a fine ſpeech on the occaſion.—I deſire there may be no more ſaid of the matter; it won't tell to my reputation—Old Jeffery knows all about it.—The world was a bad world, even in my young days, and I contributed to make it worſe: I us'd your mother like a raſcal, the more ſhame for me! She never forgave it, and I never ceas'd repenting of it: If ſhe wou'd have told me where to find you, you ſhou'd not have been ſo long without a father.

O'Fl. O *Jubilate!* what a hurricane of good luck is fallen upon us.—Hark ye, Mr. Jack Huſtings, you and I will make the corks crack for this.

Bluſh. Louiſa, may I not preſent you to my father? *(Preſents her.)*

Ruefull. Happy be your lot, young lady! May the ſon repair the injuries of the father! and, by the honour of his conduct to your family, atone for the ſhame which mine has brought upon it!

Lady P. I am not the leſs confident of his conduct, when I find he is honourable and virtuous by inheritance.

Ruefull. I am only afraid he is too rich to be virtuous; if I was to conſult his true intereſt I ſhou'd diſinherit him.

Bluſh. Fear me not, Sir, whilſt there is an honeſt man in this company in want of that which we abound in.—Captain O'Flaherty, I hold myſelf accountable for Lady Paragon's debts; they are gaming debts indeed, but no leſs debts of honour:

She has loſt a wager to you of a wedding-favour —It is not very elegantly made up, but it is cordially beſtowed—I hope you'll wear it for her ſake. (*Gives a paper folded up.*)

Ruefull. Well ſaid, boy! you are my own ſon; —you have put my money out to uſe already.

O'Fl. Out upon it! 'tis a ſubſidy for a German Prince! I'll not touch a ſtiver of it. Zooks! man, I never wanted money, for I've always liv'd without it.

Lady P. Take it, however, if it be only to do honour to the friend that gives it.

Phœbe. Let me join intereſt with my niece in the requeſt: and now let's ſee if you dare to hold out againſt the petition of the Ladies.

Sir Jeff. Siſter Phœbe! ſiſter Phœbe! give me your hand—by the bones of the Latimers, you are an honour to my family. Henceforward we ſtrike up harmony and good fellowſhip for our lives.

Phœbe. Let us all be friends, and all be happy! —Call in your neighbours, brother Jeffery, and let Merryfield-Hall blaze on this joyful occaſion!— Mr. Huſtings, as you are looking out amongſt the old and ugly for a partner, let the fiddles ſtrike up, and you and I will join in the dance.

Jack. 'Tis a bargain! now you are fair Phœbe again.—Away with all bickerings for ever! let thoſe take them up that like 'em.—I ſhou'd wiſh to know what puniſhment you cou'd find in your heart to inflict, if I dar'd to repeat my offence in the face of this good company.

Lady P. I'll anſwer you that queſtion—Tranſportation for life.

Sir Jeff. To the land of matrimony.

Jack. I am reſign'd to my fate—Let the law take its courſe!

Sir Jeff. Get the warrants ready: Here is double duty for the Ordinary.

O'Fl. Ladies and Gentlemen, a word with you before you are turn'd off—I hope I am not to be your executor, for I have enough already on my hands with theſe papers.—Will you be my banker, old Gentleman? and lay out for a purchaſe of juſt ſuch another little cot as your own; where, with a rood of potatoes in my front, and an acre of bog at my back, I can ſit chirping like an old cricket in my chimney-corner, and ruminate on the occurrences of this happy day.

EPILOGUE:

Written for Miſs FARREN,

By E. TOPHAM, Eſq;

IN this gay age, when all the heart is waſte,
And frighted Nature flies the realms of Taſte,
Is there a well-bred dame, whoſe cheek diſcloſes
The bloom—of Rouge, cold Cream, and Milk of Roſes,
Who deigns theſe ſplendid ſide-boxes to grace,
In Figero *feathers and* Lunardi *lace,*
And, gently lolling on her favourite page,
Laughs—and talks ſomewhat louder than the Stage?
If ſome ſweet girl—another Werter's *pride—*
In pure ſimplicity ſhould grace her ſide,
And feeling what ſhe *hears, devoid of art—*
Drop a ſoft tear—expreſſive of the heart;

Would

Wou'd not the faſhion'd dame our child reprove,
And cry—" Indeed—you're vaſtly wrong—my love!
" What weep? O fie!—I bluſh:—this ſtrange diſorder
" Will make folks think you enter'd with an Order!"
While in high life our hearts the faſhions ſteel,
Too gay to liſten, and too fine to feel—
Honeſt John Bull—*before a ſturdy elf*—
Now claims no right of judging for himſelf;
To PUFFS *from Theatres gives up his vote,*
And kindly thinks all true—*becauſe 'tis wrote;*
For when no plaudits ſtrike our duller ear,
The papers *hear a voice we cannot hear*—
And when for ſeats no beauties diſagree,
They *ſee a croud, alas! we cannot ſee;*
—*And while you clamber o'er the empty rows,*
In ſweet ADVERTISEMENT—*the Houſe o'erflows!*
Puff is the word: where fame is not *a breath,*
—*How many an Actreſs Puff has ſav'd from death!*
And Actors for whom Mutes were full enough,
Have riſen ALEXANDERS—*from a Puff!*
While generous paragraphs all-laviſh give
Sums Total, which our Treaſurers ne'er receive.
With added force—the other Houſe comes after—
Here, dead with grief, you there revive with laughter—
Beaumarchais's *Muſe—a favourite of the nation*—
Now riſes like ſome Biſhop—by tranſlation.
Jeſt, repartee, and ſtage effect ſtill teaze you,
With wit made Engliſh, and with French made eaſy.
Say, then—as humble copyiſts—ſhall WE *borrow*
A ſketch of what ſome pens may ſay to-morrow?
" *The Comedy—where laughter knows no pauſe*—
" *Went off with moſt aſtoniſhing applauſe!*
" *The dreſſes, ſcenery—and ſituation,*
" *Exceeded all the bounds of commendation!*
" *The great demand for ſide-boxes, from Monday*
" *Will know no intermiſſion—but on Sunday!*
" *The eighth, tenth, twentieth nights—each place is choſen*—
" *About the fiftieth you may pop your noſe in.*
" *The Actors all—were wonderfully clever;*
" *The like was never ſeen, nor heard—no never.*
" *Miſs Farren's widow—above all—d'ye ſee,*
" *Was*—YOU *muſt fill that vacancy for* ME!"

A APN54 S.